

PERIL PRESS presents:

# THE ADVENTURES OF BAZARADA

ALL 6 HOUDINI INSPIRED TALES!



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“Sax Rohmer made friends with escape artist Harry Houdini, who wrote to him in praise of Rohmer's *The Romance of Sorcery* . Rohmer based his mystery-solving magician character Bazarada on Houdini.”  
(Wikipedia)

This ebook collects all 6 Bazarada stories as they originally appeared in Collier's magazine.

**THE JADE SERPENT** - Collier's, September 18, 1937

**RED DOCTOR** - Collier's, October 9 1937

**TUNNEL OF THE APES** - Collier's, November 13 1937

**THE MUMMY THAT WALKED** - Collier's, January 15 1938

**BLACK MAGIC** - Collier's, February 5 1938

**DEATH IN THE KING'S ROOM** - Collier's, August 6 1938

**GALLERY**

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*Collier's Weekly* , September 18, 1937

# **THE JADE SERPENT**

**by Sax Rohmer**

Illustrated by Ronald McLeod

An exciting tale of mystery and adventure, wherein that master magician Bazarada clears up one of Scotland Yard's most difficult cases

Black magic in the service of a fair lady



## **The Jade Serpent**

An exciting tale of mystery and adventure,  
wherein that master magician Bazarada clears  
up one of Scotland Yard's most difficult cases

I WAS late for my appointment with Bazarada. To my personal knowledge Bazarada had never missed an appointment in his life; accordingly, I cursed every traffic jam.

You remember Bazarada? Who does not! The most amazing magician the world has known since that morning in 1795, when a French officer with a half company beat upon the doors of a fortress prison in Rome. They came to demand the release of the man who had cried: "Frenchmen, your Bastille shall become a public promenade!" The doors were opened and the officer was told, "Cagliostro is dead."

Cagliostro was dead! A full century was to pass before Bazarada should be born.

Locks meant less than nothing to Bazarada; no prison bars could cage him. Men of first-class intelligence credited him with occult powers. And those who were present when, handcuffed and leg-ironed in a sealed wine cask, he was lowered into the Rhine at Duesseldorf, will remember the moment when he swam to the surface. My own seal, amongst others, was intact on the cask when we hauled it up. Inside, we found the manacles and leg-irons. . . .

His correspondence with the late Sir Henry Farnam Page (Bazarada & Farnam Page, New York, 1934) adds some color to the views of those scientists who believed him to possess supernatural powers. His

intense preoccupation with the destiny of the human soul, his unfaltering belief in its survival, his rejection of accepted religious teaching and those extraordinary studies which he pursued in private admittedly gave weight to Farnam Page's contention that Bazarada was a black magician.

In these memoirs which now I am at liberty to publish I hope to enable everyone to judge for himself.

I hurried into the apartment-house lobby. The hall porter-liftman saluted.

"Any callers, Weston?"

"No, sir."

"Phone message?"

"No, sir."

It was all but incredible that Bazarada should have missed an appointment. I couldn't make it out. However, I nodded to the porter as he opened the gates of the elevator and stepped in behind me, reopening them again on the fourth floor. I heard the plaintive note of his descent as I put the key in the lock of my door. Tossing my hat onto a settee in the lobby, I went straight through to the study.

"Laroo!" I checked on the threshold, staring.

Any man would have stared.

A girl was seated cross-legged, Arab fashion, on the floor; her slim ankles were interlocked and her hands clasped her knees. She had been reading but she glanced up as I spoke.

"Hello, Maurice. Did I scare you?"

The largest and most ingenuous eyes I had ever seen, fringed by the longest black lashes I had ever imagined, regarded me innocently.

Laroo arose from that queer position with the ease and grace of a crouching gazelle and replaced her book.

"You didn't exactly scare me, but how did you get in?"

She turned. With Laroo, laughter began in her eyes, and I saw her lashes flicking; then she had bounded forward; her hands were on my shoulders and her impish, laughing face was very near to mine.

"Maurice, you are too angelic to be real! You *know* Buzzy never forgot an appointment. I'm his deputy. . . ." She stepped back, ceasing to laugh. Her mobile features became a mask of wistfulness. "I shouldn't

have laughed at you because you didn't know how I got in. Buzzy told me this morning I'm what the English call a female cad. Do you think so?"



I HAD been a guest at Laroo's last birthday party: There were seventeen candles on the cake. I looked at her now as sunlight gleamed on the waves of her dark hair; supple, creamy-skinned Laroo, with eyes like shadowed violets. No man, I thought, save Bazarada (known affectionately to his friends as Buzzy) could have found heart to tell her that she was anything but adorable.

"I don't think so, dear, and I'm sure Buzzy doesn't think so either."

"I suppose he's just a pig," said Laroo resignedly. "Well, he sent me to tell you, Maurice, that he can't go to the Oriental Exhibition this afternoon as arranged, but"—raising a chiding finger—"he very particularly wants you to go, and to tell him all about it at dinner tonight."

“Oh! Dinner isn’t off as well?”

“No, dinner’s okay. Although I know it will be very boring, you will go to the exhibition, won’t you? Buzzy was most anxious.”

“But aren’t you coming with me, Laroo?”

“No, Maurice, I’m sorry. But truly, I can’t. And now, I’ll tell you how I got in. It’s terribly primitive; that’s why I laughed.” (Primitive was one of Buzzy’s pet words.)

“I sent your porter up in the elevator with a message for a Mr. Orson who lives on the second floor. While he was gone I walked up the stairs. I opened your door with this key—Buzzy’s latest.” She displayed a queer-looking key. “Buzzy says I’m rotten with locks, so I wanted to practice. It took me nearly three minutes—so I am rotten.”

I watched her seriously, for she had meant her words to be taken seriously. It was rather grotesque, this interest in lock-picking and irregular entry on the part of a charming young girl newly from a French convent.

“And how do you propose to get out, Laroo?”

“Easy. Go down to the second floor ring for the elevator and walk out while it’s coming up!”

P ICCADILLY, sun-bathed, had taken on a preseasonal gaiety when I went into the Oriental Exhibition at Burlington House.

The brilliant weather may have been responsible, but attendance was not large. In these visible evidences of a culture flourishing when the proud

Briton continued to paint his person with woad I found a philosophy most soothing.

I was particularly fascinated by the jade. Hitherto, I had not recognized that amazing beauty and fantastic financial value which can belong to this hard, brilliant stone. In my untutored view, the gem of the exhibition was an emerald-green necklace, once the property of a Chinese emperor, exhibited by Sir Osmond Brigg, having 120 links fashioned in the form of a snake, and (if one could believe the newspapers) insured for the duration of the exhibition for £30,000, the risk being shared by two companies.

In my rapt study of this exquisite work of art I was not alone.

A visitor of undeterminable nationality but striking appearance was absorbed in contemplation of this, one of the outstanding items of the

whole collection. Unusual features of his attire were a French cape and a wide-brimmed black hat. He was swarthy, had a short beard and mustache, and wore horn-rimmed glasses. There were no more than six or seven people, including the attendant, in the room devoted to jade and other hard-stone carvings, and the bearded gentleman was easily the most memorable figure present.



I MOVED away, leaving him bending over the case containing Sir Osmond Brigg's exhibits, of which the jade serpent was the centerpiece. I passed slowly along the room, and was studying some archer's rings, many belonging to the early Chinese Empire, when my arm was roughly gripped.

A big, powerful man, a provincial in his Sunday clothes, confronted me. He was high-colored, gray-eyed, and his jaw protruded menacingly.

"Maybe you'd say that again, mister!" he challenged in a low, tense voice.

I paused in confusion.

“Say *what?*” I asked.

He grasped me by both shoulders.

“You know what!” he growled.

I clenched my fists and twisted free.

“Either you are mistaken,” I said, “or mad, or drunk.”

His left fist moved back fractionally, but I was watching it and dodged that vicious lead and sprang clear. A woman screamed loudly.

“George! George!” I heard. “Stop it!”

All this was instantaneous. My assailant was preparing to follow up his attack when the commissioner on duty hurled himself between us.

“What’s this?” he demanded.

“This man cursed me!” my assailant cried in a loud voice.

We were surrounded now by a considerable group of onlookers, reinforced from adjoining rooms. A gray-haired woman, bespectacled and fluttering like a startled hen, had her arms around the mad countryman.

“Don’t notice him, sir!” Her weak eyes blinked at me pathetically.

“George is funny at times!”

“Is that so?” said the sergeant, looking from face to face. “Suppose you step out for a cooler, sir?” he suggested, tapping the big man on the shoulder.

“You’re a bit excited like.”

He turned in my direction and winked broadly. The man left without protest.

**I** DINED with Bazarada.

He was “on vacation” in England. He had leased a large house in Regent’s Park, and had assembled there that group of remarkable followers who accompanied him in his world travels—Mahmoud, the Arab who doubled in the duties of wild-animal trainer and butler; Mammy Nono, the colored woman from Alabama who had nursed Buzzy as a baby and followed him around the world as his cook, and Laroo of the violet eyes. These were some notable members of his entourage.

It was one of those intimate dinners which I loved: just Bazarada, myself and Laroo.

For once I found myself the center of the stage. I brought red-hot news.

All the evening papers featured “Daring robbery from Burlington House”—and I had been present when that robbery took place!

Sir Osmond Brigg’s exhibit, the jade serpent, had been stolen in broad daylight. A *papier-mache* dummy had been substituted, and detected just before the room was closed. Beyond doubt I had been used to create a diversion. Vine Street police station had rung me up later that afternoon.

Laroo, very beautiful in a soft green frock which displayed her perfect shoulders, was pensive and monosyllabic throughout dinner. She disappeared immediately it was over.

“She’s a bit of a hellcat, Maurice,” Buzzy whispered. “I have to crack the whip at times. . . .”

We went into that long, low, oak-beamed room in which Buzzy gave those entertainments to which, during his stay in London, it was a privilege to gain admission.

He sat now behind a big Syrian writing table, which he regarded as a mascot and took with him wherever he went. As I dropped down on a settee facing him, Mahmoud entered bearing a large tray of cut glass which he put down on a coffee table. When he retired:

“The firsthand information you brought tonight,” said Bazarada, “was of great personal interest.”

AND as I watched him and before he spoke again, I knew intuitively that he had accepted one of those strange commissions in which it was his custom to make me his confidant.

“Buzzy! You can’t mean you’re going to try to recover the thing for Brigg—even assuming you had any clue to the thief?”

“Read that, Maurice.”

From where he sat he flicked a card across the room so that it fell face upward in my hand. These small tricks, amazing to most people, had ceased to astonish me. This is what I read:

365 Grafton Street, W. 1.  
National Hospital Fund.

I am authorized to offer privately or later by public auction (proceeds to be devoted to the above) a number of autograph letters, many of them the property of Sir Osmond Brigg. Those interested in the postwar period, politically, socially or theatrically, would find interesting material here. Particulars upon application.

J. J. COMPERVILLE.

I looked up to find Bazarada's disconcerting eyes fixed upon me.

"I don't recall," I said, "ever having read a thing of this kind before. Who is this man?"

"Dummy of Brigg's," Bazarada replied.

"But do I understand he is offering to sell private correspondence?"

"Undoubtedly. Of course, he doesn't intend to sell it."

"This card is addressed to Lady Mercia Glyde."

"Yes. But others have received them."

I sought to rearrange my badly muddled ideas. Sir Osmond Brigg was a big name in the city: promoter of sporting and theatrical enterprises, former member of Parliament, race-horse owner and collector of jade. His private reputation was none too good. But such an exhibition of bad taste I should not have expected even from Sir Osmond Brigg.

"That circular will be publicly disclaimed," said Bazarada, "and Comperville will conveniently drop out of the picture when the purpose behind has been achieved."

"Buzzy!" Elbows on the table, chin in hands, he was smiling at me. "What's it all about?"

The smile vanished. He regarded me grimly and said in a low voice:

*"Blackmail!"*

"What! By Brigg?"

Bazarada nodded.

"He's fighting against a final crash. A thousand dollars, this way or that, may decide the issue. I've checked up on his interests. The necklace stolen from Burlington House is covered for twice its value."

I stood up in my excitement.

"You suggest," I asked, "that he arranged this theft himself?"

"I don't. But it would serve his purpose very well if the insurance companies had to pay out. I was interviewed a few days ago by a Mr.

Lawkins, of Lawkins & Lawkins, the solicitors. Scotland Yard, for whom I have acted before, as you know, had advised them to consult me.

“Who instructed them, Buzzy?”

“Lady Mercia Glyde.”

“Good heaven! Princess Mercia—”

“As she was before her marriage, yes. Very ingeniously, Maurice, Sir Osmond’s correspondents have been circularized by this fellow Comperville, inquiring if they have any objection to the sale. As a result of these circulars Lady Mercia instructed Messrs. Lawkins & Lawkins—”

“But”—I stared hard—“what do they want you to do?”

“They want me to recover Lady Mercia’s letters to Sir Osmond.”

The romance of Princess Mercia remained fresh in everybody’s memory. Hers was one of the first democratic marriages by a member of a royal family. Young, gay and pretty, her engagement to Captain Sir Malcolm Glyde had broken fresh ground as news. Everyone must remember the wedding: it was a pageant. Then, less than a year later, the premature death of Sir Malcolm’s father led to his resigning his commission and taking his place as head of the great shipping firm.

Bazarada clapped his hands. Mahmoud entered silently, carrying an ivory box on a salver. Bazarada opened the box, took out a small tablet and placed it between his lips. Mahmoud retired as silently as he had entered. As the door closed:

“Buzzy,” I said, “I don’t know what’s in that gum. You always chew it when you want high tension. I might hazard a guess, but it’s none of my business.”

His eyes were dancing and their glance communicated to me a tingling sense of impending adventure.

“Are you game, Maurice?”

“Is this to be an Arabian night?”

“Sure! I never undertake these commissions, as you know, unless I am allowed a confidant whose reputation would insure his account of the matter being accepted.”

Mahmoud threw the door open and stood aside, bowing.

“Lady Mercia Glyde,” he announced. Lady Mercia came in, a tall, slender, patrician figure, her fair head carried proudly, her expression

betraying nothing whatever. A small, thin man, whose weak eyes peered through powerful spectacles, followed her.

"Mr. Mortimer Lawkins," Mahmoud announced, bowed again and went out.

As I sprang up, Lady Mercia looked from face to face.

"I understood, Mr. Bazarada," she said coldly, "that this interview was to be a private one."

Bazarada came forward, watching her.

"This is my friend, Maurice Roder, whose books you may dislike but whose name you will know. I am supposed to be daring, but I should not venture to risk my good name unless some man of integrity knew all the circumstances."

LADY MERCIA acknowledged my bow with a slight nod. Bazarada placed a chair for her.

"You appreciate," said Mr. Lawkins, placing a portfolio upon the carpet beside him, "that my distinguished client is prepared to pay any fee within reason which you may demand in this irregular and unpleasant affair. I have—"

Bazarada turned to Mr. Lawkins.

"Any small powers which I possess are always at the service of the oppressed or the unhappy—free." He turned to the woman. "If I undertake this matter for you. Lady Mercia, it will be on those conditions."

Lady Mercia stood up and held out her hand.

"I am afraid Mr. Lawkins misinformed me," she said, "but I think I understand, and I shall be grateful all my life if you can help me."

Bazarada raised her fingers to his lips.

"Please give me all the facts. Your confidence is in safe keeping."

The story Lady Mercia had to tell was of a kind that one had heard before in relation to Sir Osmond Brigg. During the preparation of an elaborate charity performance she had made Sir Osmond's acquaintance. He possessed that strange power which belongs to a practiced libertine. Friendship of a sort had developed between them. Sir Malcolm was abroad. That this unpleasant man had fascinated her she admitted, but she denied that there had been any affair between them. However, some correspondence had passed, and:

“You see,” she said, “I am very indiscreet in speaking and in writing. I realize that there is much which might be misconstrued in those letters. It’s simply impossible for me to pay the price this man Comperville asks: I haven’t got it. Some men would understand. Malcolm would not. And”—she looked frankly at Bazarada—“I happen to love him. For heaven’s sake give me some hope!”

She had dropped the cloak, and the real woman was more lovable than the mask she wore.

“Where are these letters kept?” Bazarada asked.

Mr. Lawkins’ voice sounded like a groan when he replied:

“In the Chancery Lane Safe Deposit vaults.”

Bazarada stood up; he smiled at Lady Mercia.

“I have failed to find a lock I could not open,” he said. “But the Chancery Lane Safe Deposit—”

“You don’t mean,” Mr. Lawkins interrupted gloomily, picking up his portfolio from the carpet, “that you despair?”

“Despair? My good sir, I shall move in this matter tonight!”

**“H**ERE’S our man!”

Our appearance that night in the bar of a Mayfair hostelry privately known as The Butler’s Pantry had created a momentary hush. The establishment owes its prosperity to the patronage of manservants, butlers, chauffeurs and others: it is a scandal market well known to social paragraphists. This hush was easy to account for.

We wore blue raincoats. Bazarada’s curly head was crowned by a hard black hat; I had a soft brown one with brim pulled down. My friend was a master of make-up. My own mother must have failed to recognize me, nor should I have known Bazarada. We were as typical a pair of plain-clothes police officers as ever made the rounds of the usual West End resorts.

Now entered a pale, sandy citizen who conjured up in my mind the image of a ferret that has eaten rat poison but survived.

“Hullo, Peter!” a voice greeted him. “Through for the night?”

“A little private dinner for two,” Peter replied, “which lasted a long time. But they’ve gone off now and I’ve got the rest of the evening free.”

Bazarada grabbed my elbow and a moment later we were out in the

street.

“Who was that fellow?”

“Osmond Brigg’s man. The coast is clear.”

It was a threatening night with black clouds moving rapidly across the sky.

“Where are we bound for?”

“Brigg’s house in Bruton Street. The easiest house in London for an intelligent burglar to enter.”

We presently found ourselves in Bruton Street. At this hour it was deserted. In one of the few residences not commercialized, an entertainment was taking place. I could hear strains of a dance band, and the windows were illuminated. Bazarada pulled me into the entrance to a mews, paused there and pointed at a darkened house immediately before us.

“Sir Osmond Brigg’s,” he said. “The ground floor, as you see, is occupied by a bookshop. The bright blue door is Brigg’s.”

We crossed the street and stepped into a gap formed by the doorway of the bookseller’s shop.

“Keep a sharp lookout!”

I stared up and down Bruton Street. A car was approaching from the other side of Bond Street and a leisurely walker had just turned the corner.

“A man coming—” I began.

“Quick! Inside!” came Bazarada’s crisp order.

He grabbed my arm. I stumbled forward. A door closed—and I found myself inside the shop of Messrs. Devereux, dealers in first editions!

“Primitive lock,” said Bazarada, staring out of the window as the pedestrian went by. “I had already examined it. This way.”

We proceeded to the back of the shop, up a stairway, and then paused.

“This door isn’t used,” he explained, “in accordance with the terms of the lease. But I think I can manage it.”

A small metallic jingling followed.

“Good!” said Bazarada. “It’s open.”

**I** GROPED my way in darkness. The door was closed behind me. Then

came the gleam of a flashlight. We were in a bare passage.

"The whole of this place was formerly a house," Bazarada explained. "The ground floor is now occupied by the bookseller; those above are Sir Osmond's. There's another door at the end of this corridor which opens onto the house staircase. I only hope it hasn't been nailed up."

We reached the door to which he referred.

"Will you please direct light on the keyhole," Bazarada requested.

I did so and he made a rapid examination.

"Primitive," he murmured, "unless there are bolts on the other side."

He selected one from a considerable bunch of keys—and opened the door as though it had been his own.

"How trusting," he remarked as we stepped out onto a thickly carpeted landing. "I told you, Maurice, that this was a burglar's paradise."

He started up the carpeted stairs and I was about to follow, when:

"You have left the door ajar," I whispered.

"I have left *all* the doors ajar," he replied.

We reached the half-glazed entrance to Sir Osmond's residence. A light shone in the lobby beyond.

"Put the flashlight in your pocket," Bazarada directed.

He began delicately to manipulate the lock.

With a tenuous fragment of wire, his ear close to the door, he worked. Presently there came a click: the door was open.

Sir Osmond Brigg's apartments were furnished with lavish bad taste. Bazarada, whose objective was not clear to me, insisted on a detailed exploration. The quarters of Peter were at the top. Bazarada examined these with some care; then, working downward, we came to the dining room which, I must confess, betrayed no evidence of the dinner for two mentioned by the man. We neglected the kitchen. Descending to the second floor, we glanced over Brigg's bedroom and examined a small museum, mostly jade, which adjoined it. So we came to the first floor, our original point of entry, taken up by a large reception room and a library-study in a recess. I was tingling with nervousness.

"Here, you see," said Bazarada, swinging open a false bookcase, "is the safe."

"But the lawyer said definitely that the letters were in Chancery

Lane.”

“I know; I haven’t the slightest intention of attacking the safe: it might take as long as seven minutes. But I should be obliged, Maurice, if you would step to that window and keep a lookout.”

I groped my way to the window (we had worked by the glow of Bazarada’s flashlight) and looked out. Bruton Street was deserted. Then I saw a party making for the club around the corner but refrained from comment. Behind me, in the study recess, Bazarada seemed to be very busy. Out of the night came a car. It pulled up directly beneath me. Sir Osmond Brigg opened the door.

I turned. “Buzzy!” I cried. “Brigg’s here!”

Bazarada’s flashlight went out. My heart was beating rapidly. “Alone?”

“Yes.”

I could hear footsteps on the stairs. We were cut off!

“Turn the lights up,” said Bazarada, calmly.

As if he had known the apartment since childhood he directed the ray of his light upon a switch. I crossed, turned the lights up just as a voice sounded in the lobby:

“What the devil’s this? Starkey, are you there? The door’s open!”

Bazarada rested his hand on my shoulder and walked out to the lobby.

“Play carefully,” he said in a low voice. “I’ll give you all the cues.”

He appeared as the lobby light sprang up. I saw Sir Osmond Brigg, whom I had met twice, standing just inside the open door.

“Who the devil are you?” he cried angrily.

He was a tall, fair man with intolerant blue eyes and the imperious manner which silences shareholders.

“No need to get ruffled,” Bazarada replied gruffly. “You’ve got your job, sir, but I’ve got mine.”

Voice and manner were perfect. Buzzy was a wonderful actor: he made no attempt to remove his hat; therefore I retained my own, recognizing this touch of artistry. He handed a card to Sir Osmond, who adjusted a monocle and read aloud:

“Detective-Inspector Grimsby, Criminal Investigation Department, New Scotland Yard. . . . Oh, I see. Your friend?”

“Detective-Sergeant Jones, sir. There’s something very funny going on here.”

“How did you get in?”

“If you’ll be good enough to follow me, sir, I shall be pleased to show you.

We spotted it from Bruton Street. This way.”

We retraced the route by which we had entered—and all the doors were ajar. Coming out into Bruton Street:

“You see, sir,” said Bazarada, “somebody certainly entered your premises—no doubt with intent to burgle. He may have heard us coming in, or had the tip from an accomplice and got out through the street door. But there’s nobody in there now, and I didn’t notice that anything had been disturbed.”

“The safe!” Sir Osmond exclaimed.

“I found the safe, sir, but it hadn’t been opened.”

“Oh!” Sir Osmond uttered the word with a sigh of relief. “You are sure there is no one hidden on the premises?”

“Practically sure. But if you’ll just wait by the door for a moment, I’ll get the constable on duty at the corner to search the place with you.”

“Very well,” said Sir Osmond.

Bazarada and I started off toward Berkeley Square.

“What do we do now?” I demanded.

“We bolt!”

**A**T TEN o’clock on the following morning we stood before Sir Osmond Brigg’s bright blue door in Bruton Street.

We were accompanied by Detective Inspector Galway of New Scotland Yard, who was in charge of the case of the missing jade necklace. Bazarada was the idol of the police. They respected him because none of their handcuffs and none of their jails could hold him; loved him for his humanity, his understanding and his generosity.

“This business here last night,” said the detective-inspector, “is what puzzles me. Who were those two men who posed as Scotland Yard officers, and what was their object, if nothing has been stolen?”

I glanced at Bazarada, a distinguished figure in his correct morning dress. I hoped that I looked as debonair, but I felt acutely

uncomfortable.

"The case is so puzzling. Inspector," I replied, "that I have taken advantage of your and my friend's invitation to look into it."

"There's no doubt," the detective continued, as we patiently waited for the door to open, "that the substitution over at Burlington House was managed during the time you were there, sir"—nodding in my direction. "You were used as a red herring."

"It was a clever job," Galway continued. "They must have had a duplicate key of the case. I suspect a foreign gang."

The door opened. Starkey of the ferret face confronted us.

SINCE we were there by appointment we were immediately shown upstairs, and presently found ourselves in the library-study where Sir Osmond was seated before the desk, his secretary, Mr. Darby, a very blond young man, standing behind him. Sir Osmond turned but did not rise.

"I fail to understand," he said, focusing his monocle upon each face in turn, "why. Inspector, these gentlemen are accompanying you."

Bazarada bowed formally.

"Entirely in your own interests, Sir Osmond," he replied. "My friend Maurice Roder, whom I believe you have met"—Sir Osmond stared as though he had never seen me in his life—"has a theory regarding your serious loss. He mentioned it to me and I got in touch with Inspector Galway. He thought it might be to our mutual advantage to meet this morning."

Sir Osmond stood up, exchanging glances with Mr. Darby.

"We pay quite enough in one form or another," he replied, "for the upkeep of the police service. I have two questions to ask you. Inspector. First: Have you any clue to the thief who stole my jade necklace and left a *papier-mache* prop behind? Second: Any clue to the identity of the impostors who searched this house last night?"

Detective-Inspector Galway's shaggy black brows drew together so that they presented an unbroken ridge. His jaw protruded, but before he could reply:

"I wonder," Bazarada interrupted, "if you would mind calling your man to show the inspector any drawings or photographs you have of the missing necklace? I understand that he never saw the original."

Sir Osmond rang impatiently. Starkey came in.

“Take the inspector upstairs to the jade room,” snapped Brigg. “Show him the illustrated catalogue.”

When Galway had gone out, Mr. Darby, Bazarada and myself found ourselves standing rather awkwardly staring at Sir Osmond; then:

“Without breaking any confidence,” said Bazarada, “I may say that a solicitor acting for one of the insurance companies concerned approached merecently—”

“What do you mean, approached you?” Sir Osmond snapped. “You are a vaudeville artist. You appeared under my management on one occasion. In what capacity were you approached?” Bazarada smiled and shrugged his shoulders.

“Purely as a friend,” he replied. “People will talk, you know. Therefore, before the inspector returns, it might be a good idea, Mr. Darby”—turning to the blond secretary—“if we explored the bookcases.”

“What do you mean, ‘explored the bookcases’?” Sir Osmond exploded. “I don’t know why you a r e here, and I don’t particularly want to see you. Explain the purpose of your visit briefly, because”—he glanced at his wrist watch and sat down—“my time is valuable.”

**M**Y SENSE of discomfort became acute.

“So is mine,” said Bazarada, sharply. “Mr. Darby, there is a book on the lower shelf there, just behind Sir Osmond’s chair. I have acquired, as you may know”—his strange eyes met the angry blue glare of Sir Osmond’s—“certain powers. This extra sense tells me that the large volume entitled ‘Pirates and Piracy’ is of great interest. I should be obliged, Mr. Darby, if you would take it out and open it here on the desk.”

“This is raving insanity,” Sir Osmond exclaimed, jumping up.

“Do you wish me to get the book, Sir Osmond?” Mr. Darby inquired.

“If it will pacify the lunatic. Put it here.”

The book was placed upon the desk. Irritably, Sir Osmond threw it open—and I suppressed a gasp.

A large hole had been cut out from the center of the pages so that the book had become a sort of box—and coiled in this cavity, a glitter of emerald green, was the jade serpent!

The change of expression which swept over Brigg’s face was almost alarming. Those shadows under his eyes became black pouches, his

complexion leaden gray. He strove to speak, but uttered only an inarticulate gurgle.

"Quick, Mr. Darby!" Bazarada directed, "close the book and replace it. I hear Inspector Galway returning."

**M**R. DARBY, himself a badly startled man, obeyed the order, and the book with its valuable contents was put back in its place.

Sir Osmond slumped down in his chair. His monocle swinging on its cord tinkled against the table edge. He was staring at Bazarada as once I had seen a condemned man in the dock stare at the judge.

"There is a deed box," said Bazarada, "stored in the Chancery Lane Safe Deposit vaults in your name. My chauffeur is outside. I suggest that you give written authority to Mr. Darby to withdraw that box. My friend and myself and Detective-Inspector Galway will have to remain until the box arrives. Then"—I heard Galway's heavy footsteps in the lounge—"if you will allow me to take the box away and also lend me your volume on Pirates, no doubt Scotland Yard will succeed in recovering your property."

"I shall remember this, Bazarada," Brigg said hoarsely.

"If you are wise," Bazarada replied, "you will."

On our way back to Regents Park in Bazarada's car, a large flat deed box inscribed in red letters "Sir Osmond Brigg, M. P." on the floor at our feet and "Pirates and Piracy" on top of it, I gave voice to my pent-up doubts.

"It is incomprehensible," I said, "how you discovered the jade necklace in this book."

Bazarada turned to me; his smile was that of a gratified boy. We were just entering Mount Street, I remember.

"Really, Maurice," he declared, "this is delightful! I had not expected it. To hoodwink the public is easy—to hoodwink you is not. My dear Maurice, how could I fail to discover it when I put it there myself?"

"What!"

"The appointment with you which I missed at Burlington House was missed deliberately. I wanted you to be at Burlington House. I was the foreign gentleman in the French cape. Of course, I did not expect you to recognize me. The lock of the case was primitive, and I carried a substitute for the necklace made in my own workshop. You also failed to recognize my head carpenter, Edmundson, in his disguise of a

provincial tourist! He rather overdid the violence.”

“But the old woman?”

“That was Laroo. She begins to betray symptoms of genius, but she is getting dreadfully out of hand. And now, Maurice”—he lay back and gave way to laughter—“you know why we visited Brigg’s house last night and what we did there.”

“Good heavens!” I muttered.

“I shall hide the jade serpent,” he continued, “in some unlikely spot to which I shall give Inspector Galway a clue. Scotland Yard will then be given credit for recovering the lost property. They deserve it, Maurice. There isn’t a finer detective service in the world.”

That evening I was present when Lady Mercia called. She came into the lounge where we awaited her, her eyes widely opened, and I could read upon her face how much this meant. Bazarada bowed his inimitable stage bow, and placed a packet of letters in her hand.

**S**HE became very pale, then, unfastening the piece of tape with which the bundle was tied, she glanced through the letters.

“All there, I think,” Bazarada murmured.

Lady Mercia nodded, biting her lips; Bazarada came forward.

“How can I thank you?” she said, in a low voice. “I know I can never repay you.”

“D’Artagnan was content to kiss the queen’s hand,” he replied.

She raised her eyes, shining with happiness, threw her arm around his shoulders and kissed him. There was no implication: it was a royal gesture; but I knew that Bazarada was rewarded.

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*Collier’s* , October 9 1937

## **RED DOCTOR**

**by Sax Rohmer**

Illustrated by Ronald McLeod

In which Bazarada, master of illusion, successfully demonstrates his ability to appear in two places

simultaneously. Another interesting adventure of the world's  
greatest magician

### Magician in false face



**I** WOKE with a start.

It was not late—twenty minutes to midnight, I discovered; but I had been working steadily since eight o'clock on my notes concerning the theft of the jade serpent from Burlington House. I had fallen asleep at my desk. The sound which had aroused me was a slight one—the rustling of paper.

My hands closed upon the chair arms and I stared across the study.

A man was seated there with the pages which I had written! The key of the flat was in my pocket; I had no resident servant; there was a night porter on duty in the lobby below. But the fact remained that a man, whose thick, dark curling hair receded at the temples from a fine brow, whose cleanly chiseled features had an old Roman quality, who wore impeccable evening dress and whose cynical regard was fixed upon me from beneath drooping lids, sat holding my manuscript.

*“Buzzy!”* I said.

The first momentary chill was gone. I had become used to this sort of thing. Bazarada, whom I always think of as Buzzy, had appeared and disappeared throughout several years of my life in just this manner. Obstacles, human and mechanical, meant no more to Buzzy than cobwebs to you or me.

*“Sorry to wake you, Maurice.”*

He smiled, that smile which was more a quivering of the upper lip than anything else. I had ceased long ago to say to Bazarada, *“How did you get in?”* I stood up and crossed to my small buffet.

“Whisky and soda, Buzzy?”

“A very small one, Maurice. I have read your account of my exploit at Burlington House (which, of course, must not be published until I give the word) with interest. It’s inaccurate, however, in several particulars.”

“Oh!”

“Yes. I didn’t remove the original necklace and replace the dummy in the tray—the dummy was already arranged in a duplicate tray, gummed to it in fact. I slipped out one tray and replaced the other, hence my caped coat.”

“I see. Pardon my stupidity.”

He took the whisky and soda which I handed to him and, raising the glass, stared through the amber fluid appreciatively. In my very bones I knew that something was afoot.

“Are you too busy to take a week or ten days off?” he asked.

“Not if I can be of any use to you.”

“You can. I have been offered a tough proposition. When a thing looks impossible, I get interested.”

“What is the impossible thing you propose to attempt?”

Bazarada sipped, set his glass down and fixed upon me that strange gaze which seemed to be focused on some point at the back of my head. I had learned to sustain it but had never got used to it.

“Did you ever hear of Ned Regan?”

“Ned W. Regan, of Regan’s detective agency?”

“That’s the man.”

“What about him?”

“He has offered me a little problem,” said Bazarada. “Nothing that has come my way since the jade serpent has interested me so much.”

His gaze became abstracted. Already I could see he was planning one of those all but incredible exploits which characterized his private life.

“Listen, Maurice,” he went on: “I’ll tell you a story. Ned Regan told it to me.”

That made the position clear. As I had suspected, there was adventure ahead.

THESE'S an eccentric old woman right in the middle of the picture, Maurice. Try to visualize her. She lives alone in a rambling country house. She is supposed to be very rich. She has no kin in the world except one nephew—an American. He visits her frequently. The household consists of a butler, an elderly lady's maid, a cook and a housemaid. There's one gardener, sometimes assisted by a boy who is a moron. This old woman is confined to her room. She is very autocratic. Day and night her bell is ringing. All clear?"

"It is all perfectly clear, so far, Buzzy. But—"

"Wait. One night the nephew comes to see this rather terrifying old lady. She has a jewel safe in her wardrobe and she asks him to unlock it. She keeps the key under her pillow. He does so, and he checks the contents with her. All correct. She is laboring under an impression that someone plans to rob her. She is pacified, however; asks him to pour out a glass of water and to set her sleeping tablets handy. He does so, and goes—so he says. No one saw him leave. He lives near by."

Bazarada paused, staring at me and smiling his tight-lipped smile. He seemed to expect some comment. Since I made none, he went on:

"Nobody disturbs the old lady until next day. They have orders never to do so unless she rings. The maid, entering in the morning to draw the curtains, gives one loud scream and collapses. The butler rushes up. A most brutal murder has been committed."

"Buzzy—"

"Wait, Maurice! You've got it now—but let me go on a bit farther: I want to review the facts in order. With a silver candlestick which always stood beside her at night, a candle burning in it, she has been battered to death. The candlestick has disappeared, but almost certainly it was the weapon used, and the murderer has taken it away because he fears that finger-prints on its bloodstained surface will betray him. The jewel safe is stripped. But I can see you are familiar with the case. Go ahead, Maurice. The details are probably fresh in your memory."

"Of course they are!" I exclaimed. "The murder of Lady Frances Brayde at Deep Copley in Devon! Applin, the American murderer, old Lady Frances' nephew, had tried to substitute some tablets, stolen from the surgery of a local doctor, for those which his aunt used. She detected him; and to silence her he resorted to violence. He was a very powerful fellow. I remember clearly; I have notes of the evidence."

"Thought you would have," Bazarada murmured.

"The rifling of the safe was merely a blind. He came into eighty thousand pounds under her will. It was the doctor's evidence which showed that the tablets could easily have been stolen by Applin, a friend and frequent visitor, which clinched the case for the Crown. This, and the fact that Applin built a roaring fire in his workshop the same night. Burning his bloodstained garments, of course!"

"So it was assumed."

"The doctor—whose name I have forgotten—"

"The doctor's name was Eakin," Bazarada told me.

"That's it, Dr. Eakin—gave his evidence with reluctance, as the two were friends. Applin was a crazy young scientist, and hard up—"

"Inventor of the Applin stratolobe."

"Yes; which he could get no one to back. Oh, of course I remember the murder at Deep Copley! Applin's story was as you have told it, but the evidence against him was overwhelming. The jewelry was never traced."

"**N**OR the bloodstained garments and the candlestick. All the same, the Crown secured a conviction; it looked a clear enough case, but the evidence being purely circumstantial, following an appeal, the death sentence was commuted. Well, here's a thing you don't know, Maurice: Mary Applin, the convicted man's wife, never believed in his guilt. She went to work to trace that missing evidence—"

"But they had no money."

"I agree. But Mary Applin before her marriage was Mary Regan: she's Ned Regan's niece. Regan came over and took up the investigation. He's waiting for me at the Savoy Hotel at this very moment."

"What does he want you to do?"

Bazarada stood up, pursing his lips.

"He's traced a missing witness. This witness lies dying—it's the boy, Ben Uggleston, who used to do odd jobs in the garden at Deep Copley. He never appeared in the case. He was never called. He's practically wild and sometimes lives on the moor for weeks together. He's half-witted and stubborn as a mule. He rarely speaks. But he has dropped certain words which have convinced Regan that he holds a clue to the real murderer."

“What? You think Applin is innocent?”

Bazarada nodded solemnly.

“I am almost sure of it, Maurice. Mark Applin, it seems, always had the power to make Uggleston talk. The boy has intimated that he’ll tell Applin all he knows. To everybody else he is dumb. But Uggleston can’t be moved and the authorities won’t let Mark Applin come to see him. Time is precious. Let’s be going.”

“But,” I said, what does Regan want you to do?”

“He wants me to bring Maik Applin to interview the boy.”

“Where is Applin?”

“He’s on Dartmoor. Life sentence.”

Pacing the floor of a room which overlooked the Embankment, was a burly man, black mustached, his close-cropped hair iron-gray and his eyes piercing in their regard. This was Ned W. Regan, perhaps the most famous private inquiry agent in the world.

“I’m asking you to take big chances,” he said. “I’m taking big chances myself. But I say, and I say with confidence, that we’re working to clear an innocent man and to bring a brutal killer to justice. I don’t know any better cause. I know Mark Applin. I was at Mary’s wedding. Mark’s a fanatic and he lost all he had on his experiments. Never mind. He may be mad, but he’s no murderer.”

Ned Regan paused, raising a powerful fist.

“I’ve studied the case from first to last. The theory of the prosecution was right. The killer switched the old lady’s tablets, she woke and caught him in the room, and he silenced her with blows on the head. He hadn’t aimed to kill her with the tablets—only to make sure she wouldn’t wake. What he was after was the stuff in the safe. It’s my opinion that the opium tablets had been planted before Mark Applin arrived.”

“Why do you think so?” Bazarada asked.

“Because, if the murderer wanted the run of the room that night, he would make sure she took the right medicine. It was shown she didn’t take any. That’s why she woke up when he came in. It was a weakness of the case that the tablets found at her bedside contained merely a powerful opiate, not a deadly poison. They *might* have killed her, but they wouldn’t be the stuff anyone out for murder would choose.”

“It was suggested, I remember,” I broke in, “that an opportunity to steal these particular tablets arose, and Applin took the chance that

they would prove fatal.”

“Did you read Dr. Eakin’s evidence?” Ned Regan growled. “Any one of six patients could have stolen those things. They were missed two weeks before and their loss was reported to the police. I’ve checked up every one of those patients. If I can get that boy’s story I’ve got a clear case!”

“You suspect someone?” came Bazarada’s incisive voice.

“Suspect!” cried Regan. “Would I risk what I’m risking, or ask you to do it, if I didn’t *know*? Get these points clear: First, Mark’s a qualified chemist; he wouldn’t fumble a poisoning if he wanted to do one. Second, although he’s named in the will, he didn’t know it. This I can swear to, so can Mary. Third, he was broke. He never disguised it. He needed money for his experiments. I had fixed it for him with an American firm, and he knew I had fixed it. Fourth, he was at work at his furnaces after leaving the old lady. His notes showed he had planned to work all that night. Gentlemen—”

HIS voice rose to a muffled roar; he banged his fist on a table.

“That jury was misdirected! The appeal resulted in his sentence being commuted to penal servitude. A gross miscarriage of justice ! He should have gone free!”

Indignation choked him. He turned and stared out of the window across the Embankment to the Thames.

“I went over the territory with a fine-tooth comb, and when I found the boy on a lonely part of the moor, with a twisted ankle and nearly dead of his constitutional disease anyway, I found just what I was looking for. He’d been missing since the night of the murder. Dr. Eakin runs a clinic in Moretonhampstead. The boy’s there now.

Mary is with him. But he won’t speak.”

“But you told me he said *something*,” Bazarada murmured.

Ned Regan turned. “He did. He whispered to Mary: ‘Tell Mark (he always called him Mark) I know who has the silver candlestick!’ “

Bazarada stood up.

“Mr. Regan,” he said, “I admit you’ve convinced me. I trust to your great experience and known integrity. But to get a man out of Princetown jail is something I can’t promise to do. I assume that you have seen the Home Office?”

“Too late. When I found the boy out on the moor and rushed him into

the clinic at Moretonhampstead, I managed to get a note smuggled through to Mark. I knew Uggleston's hours were numbered. Mark did a mad thing. He ran for it ten days back and tried to get through. The prison authorities don't know why he did it, but they wouldn't let him out—now."

"I see," Buzzy murmured. "I may as well confess, Mr. Regan, that you have set me a pretty problem."

TWO days later we set out for Devon in Bazarada's most powerful car. Buzzy's habits were uncomfortable; sleep meant less than nothing to him. We started at an unearthly hour in the morning.

As usual I had fallen for the adventure, and my suitcase was in the car. Bazarada sat with Dillon, his chauffeur, in front and I traveled behind with Laroo—that beautiful violet-eyed mystery whose presence in Buzzy's household had recently created so much scandalous comment.

On the deserted roads on an early spring morning, once clearly out of London, Dillon developed a speed which frankly made me uneasy. At one point we topped eighty-five. Dillon, in common with all of Bazarada's staff, was unusual. Laroo, who wore a tightly fitting tweed suit and a fur-lined cape, uttered never a word.

We lunched at the Royal Clarence at Exeter in the shadow of the ancient cathedral, and from Exeter proceeded straight to Princetown Prison. Bazarada had experienced no difficulty in securing a permit from the commissioners.

We were received by the deputy governor. Colonel Forest West.

As the purpose of these memoirs is to establish the astonishing powers of my friend Bazarada, I shall pass over our tour of that great, gray building, lying like a dead scorpion on Dartmoor.

"Well," said the colonel, a typical army man with a very real interest in his charges, "here we are." We were back in his private room. "I hope, sir," turning to Bazarada, "that you don't think there's any reason why any of my black sheep should wish to emulate you and attempt to escape?"

He turned his twinkling gray eyes upon Laroo. More often than not they had been turned in that direction.

"If I were ever a prisoner," said Laroo, "I should love to be *your* prisoner."

"Were a prisoner, dear," came Bazarada's clear voice: "when in

England speak as England speaks.”

I stared at Laroo. Instinctively I knew that she was dying to put her tongue out, but I knew that she would refrain. She narrowed her eyes and looked murder.

“I suppose they do get away at times?” I said.

“Now and again, Mr. Roder. The difficulty of getting away is not so great. It’s the difficulty of *staying* away.”

Bazarada stood up.

“I was rather hoping, Colonel, to have had a glimpse of one of your black sheep in whom I have a sort of personal interest. Maybe just because he happens to be an American. But we don’t seem to have come across him. I mean Mark Applin—the Deep Copley murder case.”

“Oh!” said the colonel, wrenching his glance away from Laroo and staring at Bazarada. “Applin—yes, of course. I understand your interest, A strange character, Applin. At first his conduct was exemplary: he is a man of culture of course; he had light and congenial work in the garden of the governor’s house until some two weeks ago. He was liked by the warders. Then, one afternoon, he made a desperate attempt to escape. Got clean away. But we caught him a mile outside Moretonhampstead. A strange business. Why he was making for Moretonhampstead no one could understand—and he wouldn’t say. However, he’s on disciplinary duties now.”

“Meaning what?” Bazarada asked.

“Quarries. I was sorry. But discipline is discipline.”

“Is it possible to have a look at him?”

“Well—” Colonel Forest West glanced at his wrist watch. “It might be managed if you’re keen.” He turned to Laroo. “You want to see this famous American criminal?”

“I should love to,” said Laroo.

It was a short drive to the quarry. Laroo was sandwiched in between the colonel and myself.

We climbed out of the car and stood on the lip of a deep depression. An armed warder came to the salute.

“Carry on,” said the colonel.

The warder turned and began to pace up and down, watching the convicts below.

“Please point out Applin, Colonel,” said Laroo.

Colonel Forest West stared into the hollow, then, throwing his left arm around Laroo’s shoulders, he extended his right hand.

“Look!” he directed. “You see the warder standing there with his rifle on his shoulder. There’s a man next to him, then another man this way, and then a third man. The third man is Applin.”

We all watched in silence for a while and then:

“Would it be useless to ask you if we could speak to him?” Laroo pleaded.

“Quite out of order, my dear,” said the colonel, dropping the embracing arm and staring into her eyes.

“Yet,” said Bazarada, “it couldn’t do any harm, could it?”

“Truly, Colonel,” Laroo whispered, and I knew that this move in the game was won, “it isn’t silly curiosity. He’s a bad man, maybe—but something must have made him bad. Let him just come and have a little talk with us.”

A brief order resulted in the warder, who was pacing up and down, setting off at the double into the hollow. And presently Mark Applin, very reluctantly, I thought, climbed the slope and stood looking from face to face.

**E**VEN in prison garb, Mark Applin was a memorable figure. His thick hair was trimmed close to his skull, but his heavy brows were raven black. I had imagined him to be a big man, but he was of no more than medium height. His build, though, was that of an athlete. He had finely chiseled features but his narrowed dark blue eyes were dangerous.

“Applin,” said the colonel, stepping forward, “this gentleman, a countryman of yours, would like a word with you.”

Applin stared up at Bazarada.

“Very kind,” he said dryly.

Colonel Forest West muttered something in an undertone to Laroo.

“Applin,” said Buzzy, “you have a fine head. I’ll swear you take a seven hat.”

“Seven and a quarter.”

The words were spoken almost jeeringly. Yet something in Bazarada’s

fixed regard seemed to have arrested the convict's attention. I saw a faint expression of curiosity appear.

"Brains. You've clearly misused them."

"Maybe you're right."

I glanced at Laroo. She was watching Applin; her eyes were bright with those tears which never fall.

But Applin's glance had never left Buzzy, and now:

"Aren't you Bazarada?" he asked.

"I am."

"I thought I was right. Glad to meet you. Once, I could have offered you a drink."

At which moment, Bazarada, stepping forward, stumbled over a block of stone and would have fallen but for Applin's outstretched hand. Even so, he clutched at the man's shoulder to save himself. And a second before he straightened up I saw a sudden light, not so much of understanding as of revelation, flash across Applin's haggard face.

Then it was gone.

"Silly of me!"

Bazarada turned, apologetically.

"Haven't twisted your ankle, I hope?" said the colonel.

"No damage. I have to thank you, Colonel, for the great hospitality you have shown us, and I feel it would be unfair to take up any more of your time."

**W**E WERE a silent party as we sped across the moor.

Laroo dabbed her eyes with a lace handkerchief, then brushed her lashes upward with a moistened fingertip. Laroo was the only girl of my acquaintance who did not have to use eye black. She glanced at me.

"Mark Applin is no criminal," she said.

Her words may have been a challenge: Bazarada had often assured me that she was as quarrelsome as a Kilkenny cat. But I did not reply. Silence prevailed again, until at a point on the moor where a narrow farm lane cut across the main road, Bazarada checked Dillon and pointed.

"That looks like your farm, Maurice." I stared out of the window.

The lane on the left dipped sharply down into a boulder-strewn valley. Perhaps a mile away, below, I saw a stone-built farmhouse and some scattered outbuildings.

"Turn into that lane, Dillon. If this is Low Quarry Farm, it's where we want to be."

It was a frightful road, what with the tracks of wagon wheels and cattle. When we reached the farm itself, I thought that I had rarely looked upon a more desolate place.

It was a long, low building never more than two stories high; the whole in a state of considerable dilapidation. A lean, brown-faced man in shirt sleeves came out of the door.

"Mr. Maurice Roder?" he asked, and I saw that he carried a letter in his hand.

"I am Maurice Roder," I replied, stepping out: "this, no doubt, is Low Quarry Farm?"

"That be it, sir, and I be Harry Gurney."

**W**E ENTERED the living room. Smoke-blackened beams just cleared one's head. A number of hams were hanging up and an ancient fowling piece decorated the arch of the inglenook.

How Bazarada, operating from London, had in twenty-four hours learned that Farmer Gurney and his wife sometimes received guests I did not trouble to inquire. He brought to problems of life that same clear efficiency which had made him the most famous illusionist in the world.

It presently appeared that Farmer Gurney's best room had gone. That which Mrs. Gurney, a cherry-faced little person, apologetically submitted to my judgment was upstairs. The door was so low one had to duck to get in, and the appointments, though apparently clean, were scanty. The window overlooked a duck pond.

"Your letter come this mornin'," said Gurney, "and we let the best room only yesterday noon. One o' these beetle hunters—Dutch, I reckon. I got his name here." He groped in a small bureau "Here it be: Dr. Hans Budger. They sent him in from down along Exeter They sent a young lady from the agency with him as he don't speak no English Plenty o' money, I reckon, and pays a fortnight in advance. So there it be."

"I suppose," said Bazarada, looking about him, "that most of your guests are naturalists or fishermen?"

"Mostly, sir, yes. And Mother, she don't like 'em—not the beetle hunters."

"Why not?"

"They go out of a night and all. It be kind of uncomfortable. Mother, she never has forgot one we had three years ago. English he was. He goes out about dusk to look for night things down along the edge of the big mire. (You can see it from your window, sir.) There rises up a bit of a mist like—and he never do come back. Mother took on awful—with police on the farm and all."

Dillon and the car were to remain: for which small mercy I was grateful. Accommodation for the car was found in a barn and for Dillon in a sort of shed some twenty yards from the house. Bazarada and Laroo were returning to London by train from Exeter, and as I stood in the yard to see them off, Laroo leaned out and kissed me.

"God help you, Maurice darling," she said. "You must be nuts to do it."

**O**FTEN enough I thought of her words in the days and nights that followed. Having unstrapped my suitcase and disposed of my things as best I could in the small room, I wandered about the neighborhood until Dillon returned. My part in the drama as usual was that of an alibi. Exactly what was expected of me during my sojourn at Low Quarry Farm was not clear. But Bazarada had once said, "If I want a natural performance from you, Maurice, I have to let you be yourself."

Dillon returned just before dusk.

From my window I had had a glimpse of the great mire mentioned by Gurney. It looked unpleasant. Beyond the slope above the farm, up toward the tor, I could visualize, for they lay in the hollow beyond, the cold walls of the grim convict prison casting their shadows on the moor. The scene had a sort of fatal beauty.

Farmer Gurney joined us in the growing dusk. He bore an uncommonly close resemblance to a tired horse.

"Did you see the big mire from your window, sir?" he asked.

"Yes—where the bright green begins."

"Aye, that's it. Sheep be lost there—aye, and ponies. Their cries be awful when the mire gets 'em."

"This place deserves to be popular," said Dillon.

"We're no great ways from Princetown neither. Many an escaped convict come this way. Aye, two I've caught. One be Hillman, the Dalston murderer. I find him hiding in the very room you be in tonight, Mr. Dillon."

"Is that so? I'll say this is a restful spot. Send nerve cases here, don't they?"

Dr. Hans Budger arrived later in a taxi from Exeter; but I had never a glimpse of him. He retired to the best room and did not emerge.

So the strange episode of the American prisoner began.

Dr. Hans had sallied forth before I arose on the following morning. Dillon and I had a timetable to follow; four-hour watches. I had my first glimpse of Dr. Hans Budger when he returned to lunch.

Other than in vaudeville and musical comedy, I had never set eyes upon an entomologist resembling him. He wore plus fours conceived in a black and white check suitable for a bathroom floor. His legs were bare, but his feet were encased in some kind of galoshes which fastened with buckles. He had a waterproof jacket of the kind worn by airmen and his head was crowned by a rusty soft felt hat with the brim pulled down so that it resembled a flowerpot. A specimen box sufficiently large to have contained a side of mutton was carried upon his back knapsack fashion. He held a large butterfly net in his hand.

But the outstanding feature of Dr. Hans' appearance was his hair.

As if in conformity with the flowerpot hat, this was of a red rarely found in nature. His beard and mustache were crisply curly like his hair, and of the same amazing color. Beard and hair were streaked with gray. He wore tinted sunglasses.

From afar, Dillon had observed the apparition. He joined me.

"Cracked, I reckon," he observed.

Dr. Hans kept to himself in the best room, and I now realized where he scored; for he who occupied the best room had the privilege of dining in his own apartment, whereas I was doomed to feast among the hams.

It would be pointless to relate in detail my life at Low Quarry Farm during the whole of the next week. With Dillon I drove about the moor, for I had to remember that professedly I was studying the locality. I learned much about the moor in those days, since I had nothing to do other than to study it.

Sometimes, in the distance, I sighted the red naturalist. He established himself as a figure of fun for miles around. Even the warders from Princetown, with some of whom I became acquainted in moor inns, spoke of the eccentric doctor. Some local wag had christened him "Daddy Carrots."

He made no attempt to fraternize. Dillon had tried but had been rebuffed. He was out at all hours of the night.

"These beetle hunters," Farmer Gurney explained over a glass of old cider, "they do go seeking night things that don't fly in the day—like I told you about the other one. To my mind they be mad. But it be possible they do have to go on that way to add to human knowledge."

Quick action came on Friday afternoon. At about half past three a damp mist began to roll like smoke across the moor.

From beyond the tor, now nearly veiled in mist, from the hollow which held the great gray prison, came a sound to tell all dwellers on the moor to bolt and bar their doors.

The deep note of a siren: a convict was at large!

"That be a man escaped!" came Gurney's excited voice. "Mother, she be locked in bedroom."

"Maybe Mother's wise," said Dillon, staring out into the fog.

The mist was creeping down the slope toward us—slowly, insidiously, borne upon a light breeze. The note of the siren seemed to grow more and more husky.

I BECAME tensely keyed up. What was happening out there I could not even guess. Then, a vast distance away, I heard three pistol shots—staccato, muted by the fog.

"He's made it, Mr. Roder!" Dillon whispered in my ear. "Off we go!"

He ran to the barn.

Three pistol shots—it was our cue!

"What be ye for to do?" Farmer Gurney gasped.

"There's someone hurt on the moor. We're going to try to reach him."

"That be madness! A sound on the moor be like a marsh light: might lead east, might lead west—"

Dillon drove the car out into the yard and I sprang in beside him. I shall never forget Farmer Gurney's expression as, headlights on, we

went bumping and plunging along the farm track.

The fog was all around us, now, but this was where Dillon's uncanny skill came to our aid. He knew exactly where we were going—he had memorized almost every yard of the route.

We gained the main road. Personally, I had lost my bearings, but I knew we were over the slope to Princetown when Dillon abruptly pulled up.

Into the sudden silence burst the note of the siren, nearer now, and louder.

We had passed no one on the road, or no one that I had seen, but as I jumped out, I heard confused voices. Dillon was a wizard driver. We groped in that direction, and suddenly the light of a powerful torch was directed upon us from not more than two yards away.

"Stop!" came a harsh order. "Who are you?"

Moving nearer, I saw that the speaker was a warder, a rifle slung from his shoulder. A motorcycle stood in the road.

"My name is Roder. I heard shots and drove in this direction."

"Is that you, Maurice? Thank heaven you came!" a voice hailed me out of the fog. "Lend a hand here. Is Dillon with you?"

*Bazarada!*

The warder studied me more closely.

"Oh! I know you, sir," he said. "It's Mr. Roder. We had a drink together two nights back."

"So we did."

"Poor old Daddy Carrots fell and hurt himself in the fog. Fortunately, your friend, who was walking over to join you at Low Quarry Farm, heard him cry out and found him. He called for help by blazing away with an automatic. I thought somebody was murdered! Here we are."

I beheld a spectacle which conveyed absolutely nothing.

Bazarada, dressed in tweeds and wearing a soft felt hat, knelt in the roadside by Dr. Hans Budger! The poor old naturalist was breathing heavily. Someone, Bazarada presumably, had removed the doctor's enormous specimen case and had put it under his head as a pillow.

What on earth did it all mean? I was in a maze.

Bazarada looked up with his tightlipped smile.

"Good for you, Maurice," he said. "Your friend here seems to be in a bad way."

"Well, you can take care of him now, I hope, sir," said the warder. "I must be off. There's a dangerous man loose somewhere on the moor."

Again the call of the siren moaned through the fog.

We heard him start the motorcycle, heard its chug-chug die away in the distance. Bazarada became transformed. He sprang to his feet.

"Quick!" he cried. "All into the car! We're not through yet."

I dashed to the car. The injured naturalist sprang up and ran after me. Bazarada picked up specimen box and butterfly net and raced after him.

"You in the front with Dillon!" he directed. "Leave the talking to me!"

AS WE all scrambled into the car in the order indicated, and Dillon proceeded to turn, I tried, but tried in vain, to unravel the problem of why Dr. Hans Budger had pretended to be injured when evidently he was not. As we started back:

"Stay as you are," came Bazarada's peremptory voice from behind me. "Not a move until you get the word."

"What you say goes," I heard.

We had traveled, I suppose, for half a mile—Dillon miraculously had avoided a stationary car; then, when we came to the lane branching left to Low Quarry Farm, he drove straight past it. I was about to call out when there came the roar of a motorcycle engine. Another armed warder overtook us, raising his arm as a signal that we must stop.

"Touch and go this time," Bazarada murmured. "Let's hope he knows him."

The man opened the door and stared into my face.

"There's a prisoner at large," he said. "Seen anything of him on the road?"

"Nothing."

"Who's that in behind? Will you please put the lights up?"

Bazarada switched on the interior lights. I turned as the warder peered into the back of the car.

Dr. Hans' brilliant red head was resting on Bazarada's shoulder; Buzzy's arm supported him.

There was a moment of such dramatic silence that I shall never forget it, and then:

"Why, it's poor old Daddy Carrots!" the warder exclaimed. "Good Lord! What happened to him? Hasn't been attacked?"

"No, a bad fall. I'm afraid he's seriously injured. Would it be possible for you, Officer, to act as our guide to the house of Dr. Eakin in Moretonhampstead?"

"Dr. Eakin? Well, you're not far out of Moretonhampstead. I was heading that way myself. Yes, I'll show you. Follow my taillight."

And once more we were off, an armed warder for our guide. A quarter of an hour later we had carried Dr. Hans Budger into the house and the door was closed.

THE scene that night at Dr. Eakin's was one no man could ever forget. In the lobby of the large annex to his private house which the doctor conducted as a sanatorium, Ned Regan was standing with his arm around the shoulders of a girl so slender as to look almost ethereal. Russet-brown hair framed a pale but charming face which suffering had touched to beauty.

With three deft movements (and in his best stage manner) Bazarada whipped off the red wig, mustache and beard from Dr. Hans—and there stood Mark Applin!

"Mark!"

We all turned away as Mary Applin threw herself into her husband's arms.

"I can spare them three minutes," whispered Dr. Eakin. "Longer would be dangerous. This way, gentlemen."

He led us to a waiting room. Dr. Eakin was youngish, dark, and very fresh-colored; a typical hunting man. Bazarada challenged him with his eyes. Dr. Eakin nodded.

"A sudden relapse, not uncommon in these cases. I doubt if he will last the night. Thank God you managed it."

"Amen," growled Ned Regan.

"Would it be out of place," the doctor asked, raising his eyebrows and regarding Bazarada with an almost naive wonder, "to ask how you accomplished this?"

"Not at all." Buzzy's triumphant smile revealed the showman. "It was

hard work for all concerned, but merely rudimentary substitution. My job was simplified by the fact that Applin is about of my build. He takes the same size in hats, consequently the same size in wigs. Failing this I should have had to employ someone else to impersonate Dr. Hans Budger—"

I positively gasped.

"You were Dr. Hans?"

"Really, Maurice," said Bazarada, "you are my most responsive audience. I came down to Exeter the day before your own arrival, in the character of Dr. Hans, and made inquiries at the office of a local newspaper—or rather, Laroo, then acting as my secretary, and later as the young lady from the agency, made inquiries on my behalf. Dr. Hans, remember, had very little English. This part was simple. I had already secured a permit to view the prison. You know what happened there.

"I had detailed directions written very small upon a thin sheet of paper. This I passed to Applin when I stumbled against him in the quarry. Simple again. I recognized a resourceful man and knew that he would rise to the occasion. I whispered in his ear 'Commit it to memory and then eat it.'

"Those directions were obvious. I had learned that escapes at night were rare, if not unprecedented. The favorite time to run for it, of course, is during a fog whilst a working party is being rounded up by the warders. I told Applin to look out for a man with brilliant red hair who would never be far away; and that he would carry a butterfly net. Always, if the opportunity came, to run for the tor. If he made it, he would find the man there.

"He made it at the first chance—he runs like a fox. Under the doctor's eccentric attire, I wore my tweed suit, the trousers rolled up under the plus fours. Beard and mustache are not attached by spirit gum, they are on an elastic rubber base; can be removed in a second. The wig presented no difficulties, as the hat covered the join. My ridiculous appearance was intended to attract the attention of everyone in the neighborhood."

"It certainly did!"

"Applin was winded when he reached me, but while he stripped I reddened his eyebrows. The specimen box is really a dressing case. The convict kit went into it. He became Dr. Hans Budger. One warder, the one you found me talking to, Maurice, was perilously near. He had parked his bike and started up the hill. He wasn't fifty yards away

when I fired the three shots."

A nursing sister opened the door and beckoned to us. As we filed out: "If I'm arrested for this job," said Dr. Eakin, "I shall at least be arrested in good company."

The room in which presently we found ourselves was one with a balcony and normally would be bright. There was a screen just beyond the door and in its shadow we halted and watched. I could see Mark Applin, his queer attire hidden beneath a dressing gown, bending over a bed. He held his wife's hand.

Poor Ben Uggleston was looking up at him with glittering eyes. The boy's brown skin had an appearance of transparency; his thin fingers twitched on the coverlet. He had a shock of reddish hair and was marked by Mongolian features.

"Hullo, Mark!" he whispered.

"Hullo, Uggy! How do you feel, old boy?"

"No good, Mark. Goin' to die."

"Don't be silly."

"Can't help it, Mark. Always been silly. Wouldn't have worried you, Mark—I don't matter—only you was always fond of the old woman down along Low Copley, you was. I know who stole her candlestick, so—"

He paused, choking, and I held my breath, until:

"It was Simon Venner. That rat of a butler—took it. I was layin' under the hayrick and I see him come out. He has a bundle. He takes out the candlestick, and I see it's all sticky and red—"

"Yes, Uggy!"

Applin's voice was unsteady. Mary Applin was trembling.

"He washes it under the gardener's tap—you know the tap I mean, Mark. He wraps it up—"

The feeble voice died away. The brilliant eyes closed.

"Yes, Uggy! What did he do then, old boy?"

Without opening his eyes:

"Set out for Dean's Hole. I was close behind him, I was. Threw his bundle into the hole—but not—the candlestick—Mark!"

"Yes, old boy?"

The feverish eyes opened and looked up into Applin's face.

"I'd have told you before, but—I for got, Mark."

**I**T WILL be recalled (the case created great excitement) that Mark Applin gave himself up to a constable who was cycling in search of him along a moor path. He was in convict kit again.

About an hour before, a party armed with suitable tackle and working by lantern light under the direction of Ned Regan had explored the dark pit known as Dean's Hole and had recovered from it a soiled dress suit and a bloodstained shirt. Unauthorized, but strong in his grim reputation, Ned Regan had personally arrested Simon Venner, the exbutler, and hauled him to Exeter police station.

Venner, following the trial at which he had been an important Crown witness, had leased a room in the old city. The missing property, including the silver candlestick, was found under a floor board of this room. He it was who had stolen the opiate tablets (he was one of the "six patients" mentioned by Regan); and he it was one month later who paid the penalty.

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## **TUNNEL OF THE APES**

**by Sax Rohmer**

Illustrated by Ronald McLeod

Bazarada and the key to Gibraltar. Further exploits of the great magician, to whom all things mysterious are revealed and no task for humanity is too difficult.

Tunnel of the Apes. Undermining the British Empire.



Back turned to me, he inserted a key in the lock of the office

AS WE are to be fellow passengers, Mr. Roder, I shall not say goodbye, but only good night.”

My stout acquaintance smiled, bowed in his oddly formal fashion and hurried away.

Seven miles north the triple flash of Colombo High Light callously stabbed the tropic night from its lofty station on the clock tower. Fishermen’s flares flickered along the silver-sanded coastline where natives beached incoming catamarans. And the air was pungent with an acrid smell of wood fires from the adjoining village.

Herman Forz was my stout acquaintance’s name, buyer for a well-known firm of Fifth Avenue art dealers, a remarkably informed man and an amiable and amusing companion. I had come down from Kandy Heights the day before, having spent an enjoyable fortnight with my old friend Rawlinson, who grew tea but always preferred whisky. I had slightly curtailed my visit as the R. M. S. Roratonga

homeward bound from Brisbane was due at Colombo in the morning.

I had secured accommodation through the agents—for Bazarada was on board returning from an Australian tour. It was good to think that I should see Buzzy in the morning.

It would be fine to meet again Dan Dillon, his chauffeur manservant, equally ready with tongue or fist; Edmundson, his carpenter in chief; and Laroo—particularly, perhaps, Laroo. I wondered how, in the months that had elapsed since our last meeting this strange romance had developed. In addition to these the world's greatest magician carried three tons of baggage, including Satan, the black puma, and a team of six white ponies; the menagerie being in charge of Mahmoud, that decorative Arab who had toured the world with Bazarada. Nor must I except Mammy Nono, the colored cook.

I remained seated for some time after Herman Forz had gone.

A human problem was bothering me. It was this: On my arrival the day before, I had noticed Mr. Forz, whose acquaintance I made later, lunching with a fair-haired young man, quite obviously a soldier. Forz, bald-headed, bespectacled and brimming with geniality, had made an enormous meal. But the younger man had eaten next to nothing and had seemed unhappy.

I never saw them together again.

A Cunard cruise, outward-bound from Southampton, called that night, and I was at the reception desk when one of her passengers arrived ahead of the rest and booked a room. I could not avoid hearing his name, and it stuck in my memory: Major Blaise Garth, a gray-haired, grim-faced officer somewhat sardonic but with a twinkle in his light blue eyes.

He had taken his breakfast next morning with the fair man, and the latter's appearance had appalled me. Obviously he had not slept, and when the other's eyes were not upon him he would dart glances at Major Blaise Garth which were fearful, almost piteous.

The association between these three was the problem that puzzled me. Palpably the youngster was in trouble. The band struck up *The King* with enthusiasm. The lights of the bathing pool snapped out, and the plaintive tremolo of a Tamil love-chant floated up from the village.

I set out for a walk. Just clear of the hotel as I entered the dark aisles of a palm grove, my reflections were interrupted. Two men appeared out of the shadows and passed quite close to me. I recognized Major Blaise Garth and the younger soldier.

The latter had seen me a second too late to check his words:

“Am I to consider myself under arrest, sir?”

It seemed fated that I should obtain glimpses of some secret drama being played out by these men. Again I wondered where Herman Forz came into the story.

I may have gone a quarter of a mile on—I think it was less; but except for a dim sound of surf the night was so still that the crack of a shot brought me about as though it had been fired at my heels.

I began to run back. Other footsteps there were, but I came upon the tragedy first. The fair young man lay beside the path, prone, a revolver near his outstretched hand. Major Blaise Garth and another whom I didn’t know were next upon the scene. . . .

I BOARDED the Roratonga in the morning five minutes after she had dropped her anchor. Laroo was at the top of the ladder, sunburned, and even more lovely. She wore a bathing cap and a loose robe over her swim suit. As I stepped on deck she threw her arms around my neck and kissed me.

“Maurice, darling!” she cried. Even in those few months I recognized a new maturity in her voice. “How we have missed you! Buzzy has champagne all ready in the cabin. Come on!”

Bazarada was lying on a settee in the sitting room of his suite. He wore a white shirt with the collar open, and a brilliant scarlet dressing gown. As he sprang up to meet me, head thrown back, hands outstretched, I saw, except for that fine brow, the very image of Cagliostro as he appears in the bust by Houdon. No words could have expressed a warmer welcome than flashed from those heavy-lidded eyes.

“Maurice!” He grasped my hands. “It’s good to see you!”

He held me so for some moments, looking me over with that intense but kindly curiosity which sprang from the great love he had to give to his friends. He, too, was very sun-browned.

“You look as fit as a flea, Buzzy.”

“You don’t carry the weight of years badly yourself, Maurice.”

“I think he looks lovely,” said Laroo, “but thirsty.”

She was standing at a table where now I saw an ice bucket embracing a magnum. As if one had touched Aladdin’s lamp, Mahmoud entered, statuesque in white uniform.

“Blessing and peace, Mahmoud,” I exclaimed.

I was ridiculously happy to find myself with my old friends again.

“Blessing and peace to you also, Roder Effendim!” he replied, teeth glittering under a jet-black mustache.

It was like a family reunion. Laroo sat on my knees, one slim sun-browned arm around my neck, and sipped wine, telling me a hundred and one things.

“You think aloud too much, Laroo,” said Bazarada sweetly; “some people would call it chattering.”

Poison darted from under Laroo’s lowered lashes; then to me:

“Imagine what he said this morning, Maurice,” she whispered. “He said to kill the mike or he’d knock my block off.”

“You are a talented little liar,” Bazarada remarked judicially. “And don’t use such barbarous English as ‘he said to kill.’ The nuns never taught you that.”

“Of course they didn’t,” Laroo returned. “So how would I know it if you didn’t say it to me?”

**I**T WAS a characteristic conversation which others might have misunderstood, but I knew that every one of Laroo’s provocative misstatements was a caress which Bazarada chose to ignore.

“What’s new, Maurice?” Buzzy asked.

I told him something of my two weeks up at Kandy with Rawlinson and this brought me to the of the young officer on the previous night.

“It seems he was in some kind of trouble,” I said. “A word might have saved him, but I never made his acquaintance. There’s a man on board, Major Blaise Garth, who knew him—in fact, he was no great distance away when the poor fellow shot himself. He’s very reticent about it, though. Honor of the Service, I suppose. He was afraid they would hold him for the coroner’s inquiry, but as he’s on urgent government business, they accepted a sworn statement, and allowed him to sail. Nasty business, Buzzy. I feel awfully sorry for the poor young devil!”

“Oh, dear!” said Laroo, her eyes now very sad. “It could only have been that he was in love—it couldn’t have been anything else, could it?”

“No, Laroo,” I answered, surreptitiously winking at Buzzy. “People

don't shoot themselves for anything else."

But I was thinking of the words I had overheard: "Am I to consider myself under arrest, sir?"

WE SWELTERED along through the Indian Ocean.

Laroo's flirtations were only excusable on the ground of their numbers. I fear she had many enemies among the women passengers, yet I could have reassured them one and all.

Laroo played the game. Her victims were all unattached.

Bazarada was popular with everybody. He sailed through to the final of the mixed singles, and then allowed an amazon from Coolgardie with muscles of iron but a heart of gold to defeat him. His defeat was more popular than his triumph would have been. Buzzy was a great showman.

I had improved my acquaintance so tragically begun with Major Blaise Garth. I liked him. No man possessing common discernment could have failed to respect him. He had the square jaw of the typical soldier, and laughter took the form of rippling dimples in that formidable chin, accompanied by a dancing of his light blue eyes. Laroo he treated as a child, but something akin to friendship sprang up between Major Blaise Garth and Bazarada.

Another passenger (if anything more aloof than the major) was my hotel acquaintance, Mr. Herman Forz.

I joined him in the smoke room on several occasions, and found him to be a mine of vast and extraordinary information. There were few places in the world he did not know intimately.

We were past Aden and sweltering to death in the Red Sea before any of us heard the story of the Barbary Tunnel—the story which explained the Colombo tragedy, and so much more.

DAN DILLON came up to me one afternoon on deck—we were somewhere off Port Sudan. He looked very smart in white drill.

"Mr. Roder—the boss' compliments and would you step along to his cabin?"

I had never grown used to the modes of address employed by Dillon, and:

"Is it urgent, Dillon?" I asked.

"Sure it is if the boss wants you, Mr. Roder. He's down there with

Major Pokerface, and he said to step in.”

I stepped in.

Buzzy half lay on the settee; Major Blaise Garth stood staring out of a porthole. As Dillon ushered me into the cabin:

“Shut the door, Dan,” said Bazarada, “and see we’re not interrupted.”

As the door closed the major turned. There were no dimples in his square chin; his eyes were cold and very steady.

“I know you by reputation, Mr. Roder,” he said, “although I don’t recall having read any of your books. But what I have to say is in confidence between gentlemen. Mr. Bazarada—” he checked himself instantly. “You object to the mister. Bazarada, here, very wisely, in my view, insisted upon your being a party to the enterprise which I have invited him to undertake.”

This time it came out of the blue. But I knew as Major Blaise Garth spoke that there was something queer afoot, something in which Buzzy’s peculiar powers would be useful.

“What seems to be the trouble?” I asked.

“Perhaps,” said Bazarada in his incisive way, “it would be as well, Major, if you told the story from the beginning.”

“As you wish.” Major Blaise Garth nodded. “In many ways it’s a simple story, but somewhat tragic. There were two young officers stationed on the Rock—Gibraltar. They were friends—a pair of Sappers, you understand. One, Swinnerton, a brilliant fellow, entirely in his own time carried out a remarkable job. He prepared a—shall we say, document?—the highest interest to the officer commanding at Gibraltar. Swinnerton suffered privations in the course of these inquiries, but the work which he did would have been the basis of a fine career. Unfortunately, he fell sick. Flu was the diagnosis. He was confined to his quarters and during this time completed his task. His friend, the other young officer (we’ll call him B.), visited him constantly. I regret to say that pneumonia developed and young Swinnerton—”

**H**E TURNED to Bazarada and snapped his fingers.

“A loss to the Service; brilliant fellow. Just before he was moved to a hospital, the result of his inquiries—which had undoubtedly led to his illness—was placed before the commanding officer. When I say that this document was sensational, I don’t exaggerate its importance. Today, almost more than in any day, Gibraltar stands solid in the

heart of a storm. Fascists and Communists seethe around it, but the old Rock stands firm. It's more than a fort. It's a symbol. It means sane government, prosperity, peace."

No emotion was displayed in Major Blaise Garth's voice, but he twirled his cigar between his fingers for a moment before continuing.

"After the funeral, B. applied for leave in advance of date, for the very proper purpose of visiting poor Swinnerton's parents (he was a friend of the family) and informing them personally of the fine job of work their son had done. Colonel and Mrs. Swinnerton were in Calcutta. Leave was granted. He set out for India."

Again Major Blaise Garth paused.

"Twenty-four hours had elapsed when the presence of certain pinholes in the document were discovered. The inference was that it had been photographed.

"I am the officer in charge of military intelligence at the Rock. I obtained evidence from a batman which clearly indicated that B. had made photographs of his friend's drawings. I may as well say that the document is a plan. This fact had not been reported, since its importance was known to no one other than to Swinnerton, who was already dying—and to B."

The major contemplated a cone of ash with the appreciation of a judge of good cigars.

"Further inquiries, which had to be hurried, revealed two things. First, that the missing officer was desperately in debt; second, that he had been seen in the company of a certain Herman Forz."

"Herman Forz!" I exclaimed, "the art dealer? He's on board!"

"I know he's on board. That's the reason *I'm* on board. But I'm jumbling my story—you would have made a much better job of it, Mr. Roder. I knew the ship in which B. had sailed for India, of course. If I could get the Cunarder I could catch him up at Colombo. I knew, also, since it's my job to know, that Herman Forz was in Ceylon. Colombo was the meeting place. My ship was eight hours past the Rock. I overtook her in a speed boat. I caught my man—but it was too late. He was so terrified when he saw me that I had no difficulty in forcing a confession—"

"It's possible," Bazarada cut in, "that Maurice doesn't follow. I don't think you've made it too clear, Major."

"Perhaps not." I watched, but never a dimple appeared on the square chin. "You see, Mr. Roder, although it's true that Herman Forz is an

accredited agent of Messrs. Roedeen of London and New York—which entitles him to travel to all sorts of odd places—he is also, and primarily, the most successful spy in Europe.”

“What!” I exclaimed involuntarily.

“He pays the best prices and knows the best markets. He has twice disturbed the peace of the world and he has slipped through our fingers three times! He is clever. His American passport is a suit of mail. He had paid this poor fool three thousand pounds cash for the photographs of the plan. The money was returned. I have it. And I believe, Mr. Roder, you passed us not far from the hotel when this unhappy young officer confessed his guilt?”

“I did, but I was not intentionally eavesdropping.”

“I had not suggested it, sir. Nor does it matter what you overheard. Mr. Brigham—I might as well mention his name since it was in the Colombo paper when we left—threw himself on my mercy, asking me if he should consider himself under arrest.”

“What did you say?” Bazarada murmured.

“I told him to report for arrest in an hour. He took the only course open to an officer who has betrayed his country.”

**I**N THE moment of silence which followed, I saw the face of the fair boy who had paid the last penalty. A weak face, perhaps, but there was no real evil there. I wondered what vile corruption had rotted his honor; and before my subconscious eye rose the genial but sensual features of Herman Forz. Yet this alone could not explain it. The true story of Lieutenant Brigham is one that will never be written.

“I am thinking,” came Bazarada’s clear voice, “that you could have the man arrested.”

“Think again, sir,” snapped the major. “The possibilities are limited. Herman Forz claims American citizenship. My only evidence is that of a dead man. Short of actually discovering the plans in this fellow’s possession, I am helpless. I have certain powers, but the commander of this ship would not recognize them on the high seas.”

“You might search the man’s cabin,” Bazarada suggested.

“I have already done so,” Major Blaise Garth replied. “I can assure you that the plans are not in that cabin.”

There was another moment of silence which was broken by Bazarada.

“Without prejudice, Major,” he said, “it might be as well if I glanced

over the cabin myself.”

“I should welcome your co-operation.”

“A man of his caliber would go to work in a big way. Has Mr. Forz deposited anything in the ship’s safe?”

“He has. By means of a number of leading questions put to a junior purser, I discovered that there are several documents of his in the safe, contained in a portfolio. One is a large, long blue envelope which I believe to contain the plans. The purser holds one key of this safe; the captain holds the other.”

“In short,” said Bazarada, fixing his disconcerting gaze upon the major, “you want me to burgle the ship’s safe? Very well. I shall explore this man’s cabin, first, but before risking my reputation and my liberty, there is one thing I shall have to know, Major. What are these plans? Are they in any way important to the welfare of humanity?”

Major Blaise Garth turned and looked from the porthole at the hot blue sea. Then, coming about, he stared at Bazarada:

“I expected you to ask,” he said, “and you are entitled to know. Have you ever studied the problem of the Barbary apes which inhabit Gibraltar?”

Bazarada and I stared at him for a moment, wondering if he could be in earnest, then:

“I have,” I replied. “It has interested many writers—including Mark Twain. I once went so far as to attempt to explore the cave.”

“St. Michael’s?” the major asked.

“Yes. The problem of why African apes should inhabit Gibraltar and no other place in Europe has bothered me quite a lot. Then, where do they go when they disappear?”

“Your imagination supplies the answer, Mr. Roder.” A hint of a dimple appeared at last upon the square chin: “A passage under the Straits to the African coast. Of course, you know the legend, and probably the evidence in support of it. Well, Lieutenant Swinnerton discovered, explored and mapped that fabled Barbary Tunnel running under the Straits and connecting the Rock with the African coast!

“Perhaps, since it forms part of my professional duties, I realize more clearly than you what this knowledge would mean to any one of three powers who gladly would buy it! There are physical reasons which make it impossible effectively to close this tunnel. Its existence means

that Gibraltar is no longer impregnable! Shall I tell you what would happen if Great Britain lost control of the Straits? The whole world would be plunged into a war compared with which the Great War would be a skirmish!

"I speak confidentially, gentlemen. But I speak of what I know. . . ."

THE first visible outcome of this conversation was that Laroo was seen everywhere with the beaming and bespectacled Mr. Forz. She even tried to lure him into the swimming pool, which hitherto he had avoided, but failed in this. They walked the deck together, had tea together and danced together at night.

After lunch one day Bazarada was very thoughtful, sitting in his cabin with closed eyes and tight lips.

"Thanks to Laroo's good work," he said, "I have thoroughly overhauled Mr. Forz's cabin and I agree with you, Major, there are no plans there."

"I have not been idle myself," Major Blaise Garth returned, his chin dimpling. "I think I mentioned that a locked leather portfolio was handed to the purser when Mr. Forz came on board? Well, I suspect that Forz knows that his cabin has been searched!"

Bazarada raised his heavy lids, staring at the speaker.

"What makes you think so?"

"It appears that yesterday morning he withdrew the portfolio for an hour or more, and then returned it. Evidently he had something of value in his cabin (although I agree it could not be the plans) which he decided to place in safe custody."

"It certainly appears that I shall have to look over the purser's safe," Bazarada murmured.

Major Blaise Garth watched him in rather a puzzled way.

"You don't seem too optimistic."

Bazarada's upper lip twitched suspiciously.

"I have had some conversation with Mr. Herman Forz," he replied. "I have learned three things: one, that the plans are almost certainly in his possession; two, that he suspects I am co-operating with you in trying to recover them; and, three—he doesn't think I have a ghost of a chance! I'm wondering why he's so confident."

We were heading in for Suez before Buzzy was ready for the attempt.

THE chief officer's watch, 4 to 8 A.M., on a passenger ship covers that period during which life aboard is at its lowest ebb. My cabin was on C deck, opening almost directly upon the square in which the purser's office was situated. As a late comer I had had little choice. Buzzy's suite was on the deck above.

Eight bells sounded (4 A.M.) and I stood by for duty. As one bell struck (4:30), I rang for Sanders, the night watchman.

Wearing a dressing gown and pajamas, I received him, when he arrived, seated at a small table, writing busily.

"I want a cup of coffee," I said, "and when you bring it, bring two bottles of lager as well."

"Very good, sir."

The night watchman departed.

I tiptoed to the end of the narrow alleyway and watched his retreating figure. Save for that regular creaking and intermittent rattling common to any ship at sea, there was no sound to indicate that a soul was alive on board. Although all ports were open, the night was steamingly hot. It would be cooler up above, for there deck doors were open as well. The portholes on C deck gave directly upon the sea.

The figure of a man wrapped in a dingy gray gown appeared so suddenly that I had no chance to see his face. Back turned to me, he inserted a key in the lock of the office. Untidy dark hair, build, gray gown, all might have belonged to Bowman, the purser.

I stepped back into the alleyway. A thrill of intense excitement came; it always claimed me when I shared one of Bazarada's exploits—for I knew that the man in the gray gown was Bazarada.

A bell rang. Buzzy had not yet succeeded in opening the door.

Someone else on C deck had rung for the night watchman!

Evidently the cabin was starboard—for just as the purser's door swung open and Bazarada stepped in I heard Sanders' voice:

"Ello, sir! Is that you, Mr. Bowman?"

A pause, then:

"With you in one moment, sir." Sanders was speaking to the passenger who had rung. "Something I 'ave to look into, first, sir."

The door closed. I remembered my instructions—superfluous, now, I

feared.

"Hi! Sanders!" I shouted. "Wash out the coffee. Bring the beer!"

"Just one moment, sir."

He came hurrying from the main starboard alleyway, and checked before the purser's office. He rapped loudly on the door. There was no reply. He turned and saw me. 'Ave you been out 'ere long, sir?"

"No. I was coming to look for you." I was thinking fast, trying to keep cool. The appalling truth had to be looked in the face. Buzzy was trapped!

"Did you see the purser go to his office sir?"

"No."

"Mr. Bowman!" cried the night watchman, beating upon the door.

"Are you in there, sir?"

"You'll wake the ship," I said sternly. "What makes you think there's anyone in there?"

"See 'im go in with my own eyes, sir, an' I can trust my own eyes."

Again, he beat upon the door. Then:

"Here, I say!" someone exclaimed. "What's all this blasted row?"

I turned. A man wrapped in a dingy gray gown, a man whose hair was somewhat disheveled, stood at my elbow.

It was Bowman, the purser!

"That's caused it," cried the night watchman. "If it wasn't you, sir, who was it?"

"You might care to mention what you're talking about," said the purser acidly. "You woke me by bellowing my name."

The watchman's story was told excitedly.

"Queer," Bowman admitted, rattling the door. "I can't imagine the Old Man coming down. It's not like him. Hi! Is there anyone in there?"

But there was no reply. "I'll get the key," Bowman muttered, turned, and hurried back to his cabin.

At that moment I realized the meaning of the saying, "My heart stood still."

Nothing could save Buzzy now!

Bowman was back in less than a minute, carrying a bunch of keys. He

was selecting one from the bunch as he ran to join us. He inserted it in the lock and threw the door open.

As lights were switched up in the office—which was shaped like a long L—I had my fists so tightly clenched that the muscles quivered.

“Hello!” Bowman exclaimed.

I entered close behind him. No one was visible. In the recess formed by the L which contained the safe, there was just room enough for a man to crouch against the wall. In three strides Bowman reached the corner and glanced into it.

There was no one there!

My pent-up feelings expressed themselves:

“Good God! It’s a miracle!”

Bowman tapped my shoulder and pointed to the open port.

“Some poor fool has jumped into the Red Sea,” he said. “God help him! . . . A brace of sharks has been trailing us all day. . . .”

He unlocked the big safe and rapidly examined its various compartments. Even in my state of desperate unhappiness, I noticed a black leather portfolio. Bowman tried the fastening. It was secure.

He relocked the safe.

“This is a mysterious and a nasty business. Sanders”—to the night watchman—“my compliments to the chief officer. Man overboard suspected; Suggest roll call.”

A FEW moments later it came; of all sea sounds the most awesome to awake on in that darkest hour of the night—the call to boat stations. Stewards were dashing along the alleyways, half dressed. “No life belts—there’s no danger!

Someone missing overboard, sir! Just a roll call, madam! . . . No. 3 station on the port side, sir! . . .”

The engines had been stopped. Now, slowly, we began going astern. A boat was swung out ready for lowering away. If I ever felt more wretched in my life,

I cannot recall the occasion. I dragged myself toward my appointed place.

Some of the women passengers were inclined to panic, but the stewards and stewardesses did yeoman work. The ship’s officers were joking with the nervous ones. I saw the captain standing beside the

chief officer on the bridge. I had nearly reached my boat station when a door burst open and a man wearing a brilliant scarlet silk dressing-gown stepped out on the deck.

It was Bazarada!

**I**NSIDE seven minutes the Roratonga was steaming ahead again. The roll call had shown no one of our complement to be missing. The episode was logged among the sea's many mysteries.

Major Blaise Garth and I stood in Bazarada's cabin. . .

"I never lock myself in any place, Maurice," said Buzzy, "until I am sure there is another way out. I cast over a knotted line lashed to the deck rail above so that it hung outside the porthole of the purser's office before I attempted to get in! The safe proved more obstinate than I had anticipated. But the lock of Mr. Forz's portfolio gave me no trouble. I inspected every document in it. None was of interest—except this!"

From the pocket of his scarlet robe he produced a long blue envelope. "It's sealed," he said, "and has written on it: 'Property of Herman Forz!'"

He laid it on the table before Major Blaise Garth.

"Bazarada," said the major, taking out a pocketknife and carefully slitting the ends of the blue envelope, "the thing you have done tonight may easily mean the peace of the world."

In tense silence we watched him tract the contents.

A strange expression passed over his face. Buzzy sprang forward—and they stood there staring into each other's eyes. The envelope contained an elaborately printed program of a charity performance organized by Bazarada some years before at the Hippodrome, New York. His photograph was on the cover. We were so taken aback that none of us heard the door open, until:

"Buzzy, darling!" came a tremulous voice. "Please forgive me!"

We all turned and stared at Laroo. She was wrapped in some kind of flimsy garment. She was watching Buzzy as a mother watches a sick child; those wide-open eyes expressed all the compassion which I felt but could not convey.

**"W**ITHOUT you, it couldn't have happened! It was the call to boat stations that did it. You see"—her voice was unsteady, frightened, apologetic—"it was through dancing with him I found out, and I only

found out late last night. I felt a thick envelope in the inside pocket of his jacket.”

She spoke rapidly, breathlessly.

“You know he has a single cabin on A deck. I had Dan borrow an awl, and while he wasn’t at home from outside we bored two holes through his blind. I guess they’ll be found in the morning. I watched him from the deck outside. And can you imagine, he sat there writing until after four o’clock! Then, he started to undress—and I saw him take out the fat envelope and put it under his pillow.”



“I watched him from the deck outside. And can you imagine, he sat there writing until four o’clock”

Major Blaise Garth whistled softly. “He just carried it around with him—even when he went to his bath, I suppose. I think it was in the safe at first—until he got scared about you, Buzzy. . . . I raced right along here. Dan’s outside and he can prove it! It was past eight bells. I looked for you. I couldn’t find you anywhere!”

There were tears in her eyes, now.

“I’d just hate you to think I fixed it! Two days back you said my head was like a perfect ivory carving—solid right through. That crack made me mad; you know it—you think I bear malice. I don’t. But when the call to boat stations came, I had a sudden idea—”

The major watched her appreciatively, his chin a ripple of dimples. Bazarada’s expression was difficult to define.

“I dashed up to A deck. Herman Forz was behaving like a Manx cat

with a long tail. I saw him out on the alleyway in his pajamas, grabbing a steward. I heard him say, 'Is the ship on fire?' 'Before he'd got an answer I was in his cabin! Is this what you're looking for?'"

From somewhere under her fluffy robe Laroo produced an ordinary commercial foolscap envelope which seemed to be very tightly packed. She handed it to Major Blaise Garth.

In the moments which followed while he opened it with his pocketknife. Bazarada watched him intently.

Laroo watched Bazarada.

The major extracted a number of photographic prints, carefully folded, with tissue paper in between; flattened them out on the table and bent over them.

"The plan of the Barbary Tunnel!" he said. "I was about to say, 'Thank God'—I will add, thank you, Bazarada, and you, Laroo. . . . It's touch and go in the world today, as I know all too well. This plan would have been a match in the powder magazine. Perhaps you will never realize what you have done tonight in the interests of all humanity."

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# THE MUMMY THAT WALKED

**by Sax Rohmer**

Illustrated by Ronald McLeod

Wherein, for a night, Bazarada invests the dead court at Cleopatra with life. Another gripping chapter in the career of the greatest magician of all time

Cleopatra's understudy



Bazarada lifted Laroo and walked through the first room and into the second. It was uncanny in that half-light, surrounded by the relics

**B**AZARADA was back in Regent's Park after his European tour. The Arab butler, the colored cook, Laroo, petulant but lovely, all were here again. Buzzy was preparing some new illusion in the workshop at the end of the garden, formerly the study of the journalist to whom the house had belonged.

He had resumed his old place in London.

The long, low lounge with its peculiar appointments buzzed with notabilities once more. Mediums were tested and almost invariably exposed; queer things occurred; and Satan, the black puma, had discovered a means of opening his cage and would look in at unexpected moments. I noted, however, that these visits usually took place if the conversation became boring.

Bazarada's sense of humor was peculiar.

One night, however, must always stick in my memory. Dulake, the well-known antique expert, an old acquaintance of Buzzy's, and

myself had been the only guests at dinner. Laroo, her long lashes lowered disdainfully, recognized that a conference of some sort was to follow, and remained consistently disagreeable throughout the meal. I must admit that Dulake's conversation was heavy. Buzzy, Dulake and myself presently retired to the lounge.

"Can we talk now, Bazarada?" said Dulake, a tall, lean man, iron-gray and of military bearing. "I mean, I take it your friend is discreet?"

"Maurice," Bazarada replied, dropping into an armchair, "is invariably my confidant in any little tangles I may attempt to unravel."

He raised his hand as the Arab entered, bringing to us that amazing array of beverages which Bazarada alone among my friends delighted to offer to his guests. When the Arab had retired:

"You know something of the difficult position in which I find myself," Dulake went on, "but if you are to advise me I shall have to give you full details."

Bazarada nodded and, leaning back in the armchair, closed his eyes.

"The situation is this," Dulake went on. "Until recently, only a few Egyptologists were aware that the mummy of Cleopatra had ever been discovered. As all the world knows now, it had been for many years a cherished possession of the Campani family, descendants of the Italian archaeologist who secretly unearthed it. The family today is impoverished. I succeeded in obtaining this unique exhibit on behalf of the British Museum. And the mummy, of course, is now in the Second Egyptian Room, a center of attraction for thousands of visitors."

The door, which was ajar, opened silently, and a black shape glided like a shadow across the carpet toward Bazarada. Eyes resembling huge emeralds glittered in the lamplight.

"Good God!" Dulake exclaimed. "What is it?"

Satan, the black puma, had come to say good night!

It crouched at Bazarada's feet to be petted, and when Buzzy stroked its beautiful head it uttered a sound which resembled a cat purring through a microphone. The statuesque figure of the Arab was framed in the open doorway.

"I might have warned you," said Bazarada, "but Satan has now earned the privilege of coming to see me sometimes after dinner. Pay your respects to Mr. Dulake, Satan."

The graceful but dangerous animal turned obediently across, and lay down at Dulake's feet. Very gingerly Dulake stroked the wicked black head.

"Now say good night to Maurice!"

SATAN moved over to me—and as I looked into those glittering eyes fixed upon mine, I conquered, but only just conquered, a desire to stand up and defend myself. I patted his head, then:

"*Ta'âlahîna, Sheitan!*" the Arab called.

Purring softly, Satan went out of the room.

"That quite startled me!" Dulake declared, hurriedly taking a drink, and staring at Bazarada as though he suspected he might be mad.

"Where was I? . . . Oh, yes! I must try to be brief—"

"If you please," Buzzy murmured.

"In this transaction with the British Museum I was not acting alone. I was associated with Benimo. His reputation may be known to you. He is one of the foremost experts in Europe—and easily the most brilliant antique faker living today!"

"You surprise me, Mr. Dulake," I said. "Some fine pieces have been shown in the Benimo Gallery in Bond Street."

"Quite true. He has handled some of the finest. He knows the real thing when he sees it and—I thought I did!" He paused and uttered a sound not unlike a groan. "I learned two days ago that the mummy of Cleopatra now on exhibition in the British Museum is a *duplicate*! Only one man in the world could have done such a thing. The authentic mummy is still in Benimo's possession."

This was certainly staggering.

In common with thousands of others I had visited the Egyptian Room when the new exhibit (acquired by the museum at a cost of twenty thousand pounds) had been made accessible to the public.

The mummy was not unlike other mummies, but the sarcophagus lid which was shown in an adjoining wall case represented in relief, very beautifully executed, the face and figure of perhaps the most glamorous woman in human history. Dulake's name had been freely associated with this sensational acquisition, and there had been protests from the Egyptian government. But Campani's piece of smuggling dated back to a time when the present restrictions had not been applied. The claim of the British Museum was upheld. Backed by

the great reputation of Dulake, none had challenged the thing's authenticity. Looking across the room, I saw a stricken man.

"Exact though the duplicate is," Dulake muttered, "sooner or later someone will find what I failed to find. On that day I am ruined!"

Bazarada opened his eyes.

"Do I understand," he said, "that this man Benimo, seeing an opportunity to purchase the mummy, got permission to examine it in the Villa Campani

"He did. He missed nothing. He took dozens of photographs."

"And prepared such remarkable duplicates—of the mummy and the sarcophagus you were deceived?"

"Exactly what happened! You see, he is a genius in his own way."

"But the mummy!" I exclaimed.

"Is that of a priestess of the same period, which Benimo had had in his possession for a long time. The peculiar wrappings and other features he reproduced. The painted sarcophagus lid he made patiently in his workshop!"

"What was his object?"

"Revenge. Three times in my capacity as expert I have detected forgeries in famous collections which have been traced to Benimo's workshop. He has always managed to produce evidence to show where the pieces were acquired. Myself, I knew that he had made them. Now—I have lent my name, my reputation, and as his agent have sold one of his duplicates to the British Museum."

There was a long period of silence. Bazarada's house was curiously silent at night. Dulake was watching Buzzy almost feverishly. Buzzy's eyes remained closed.

"Of course, you dare not admit your error to the museum?"

"Impossible!"

"Where are the authentic pieces?"

"In a specially made case in Benimo's office behind the gallery. The case is kept in a large cupboard; and the cupboard is locked."

"I will look in there tomorrow. That part is easy. Did he offer to sell?"

"Yes," Dulake groaned—"for fifteen thousand pounds!"

ON THE following day Bazarada and I visited the British Museum.

We made for the Egyptian Rooms. The mummy of Cleopatra in a case in the center of the Second Room was difficult to approach, so dense was the throng about it. But the top of the sarcophagus, a portrait in relief of the queen, which occupied an adjoining wall case, claimed an even larger audience. Finally, however, we penetrated to the mummy, and Buzzy ran his fingers very lightly over the glass lid.

"Rudimentary," he murmured.

We made our way through the throng to the second exhibit.

Looking at it and realizing that it was the work of a modern craftsman, I knew why Dulake had called him a genius. It might have been molded on a woman's body, so flawless was the anatomy. Cleopatra was represented diaphanously veiled. Her figure was exquisite, and the painted face, with the long darkened eyes, held a mocking witchery.

As we extricated ourselves from the crowd in the Egyptian Rooms:

"Would you take my card to Dr. Letchmere?" said Buzzy to an attendant.

"He is not here at the moment, sir."

"The assistant curator, perhaps?"

"Yes, sir. Mr. Warrington is in his office."

A few moments later an intelligent-looking man, wearing spectacles, but having an athletic build and great vigor of movement and address, came up eagerly to Bazarada.

"What can I do for you, sir?" he asked. "My name is Warrington. Your name is familiar to me."

"I was wondering about the exact procedure," said Buzzy in his clear voice, "in regard to obtaining expert opinion about proposed purchases. Can I throw myself upon your mercy and ask you to inspect them?"

"Certainly—it would be a pleasure. We are always delighted to help in this way."

"They are rather hefty pieces!"

"No difficulty about that, sir, if you will look after the transport." Mr. Warrington smiled happily.

“DO YOU mean that if I pay the carriage charges, you will give your opinion without charge?”

“We should be honored.”

“Many thanks,” said Bazarada; “but as I told you these pieces are rather large.” We were standing near an entrance door, and Buzzy was stroking the lock as though he loved it. “I assume you have some sort of store where heavy stuff is deposited?”

“Naturally,” said Mr. Warrington in his enthusiastic way. “If you will be good enough to come along I will show you the store.”

We descended the main staircase and then went down farther. Mr. Warrington opened a door and I found myself in a place not unlike a dock warehouse: crates, boxes, parcels, were stacked about in orderly confusion.

“Big stuff is delivered here direct by the lorries,” Mr. Warrington explained; “the smaller things, rings, scarabs, and so forth, don’t come in here at all. But if you want an opinion on your proposed purchases, Mr. Bazarada—”

“Pardon!”—Buzzy raised his hand, smiling—“there is no *mister* . Bazzar as in jazzar, and ardor as in love!”

“Oh! I’m sorry—Bazarada! If you will arrange for them to be delivered here, directly Dr. Letchmere has had an opportunity of looking them over, we’ll notify you, and expect you to take ‘em away.”

“I am much obliged,” said Buzzy. “Up to what time could I deliver them?”

“Get them here before five, when this place closes, and do my best with the doctor to have them examined on the following morning. That’s the office, through there, where the stuff is checked in.”

“How do the clerks get out if the doors are locked at five?”

“Office communicates direct with the street. So I shall expect your pieces before five tomorrow.”

“I can arrange that. I suppose things are quite safe here?”

“Rather!” Mr. Warrington smiled. “We not only lock up carefully but we also have patrols.”

“How often do the patrols go around?”

“Every hour. They register their visits on time clocks in the various rooms.” Mr. Warrington smiled. “Your Egyptian antiquities will be

quite safe here, I assure you.”

THREE nights later I assisted in a burglary of the Benimo Gallery in Bond Street.

In a small truck which either belonged to a well-known express company or which was an exact duplicate of one of their vans, I was driven to Bond Street. Dan was the driver. Edmundson, chief carpenter, and Bazarada, both dressed in overalls but wearing the company's caps, sat inside.

I wore an ordinary lounge suit—also a mustache which was not my property; and my hair had been turned gray. I sat beside Dan.

It was seven-thirty of a perfect spring evening when the truck pulled up before Benimo's premises.

“Speed is of the essence of this contract!” said Bazarada as he walked to the locked door. “You know your lines, Maurice? We've nothing to fear—except somebody from the express company!”

He looked quickly right and left. One or two business people were hurrying along. A taxi was crawling by.

Dan and Edmundson had lighted cigarettes and were leaning up against the truck when Buzzy opened the door. As he entered, they followed him in.

For me, an ordeal began.

I studied the face of every passer-by. For every one of them might be a detective or, worse, a representative of the express company!

Probably I had been there no longer than five minutes, but to me it seemed like several hours—when a constable strolled into view. He stopped. He stared at the open door of the Benimo Gallery—then stared at the lettering on the truck—and finally stared at me.

“What's going on?” he inquired.

“I'm frightfully annoyed,” I said, “and so is Mr. Benimo. But some things have been bought by an American customer, and he insists that they must be shipped in the Queen—which sails in the morning!”

The constable studied me.

“Do you represent Mr. Benimo or the express company?”

“Mr. Benimo. The express people are bringing the stuff out now.”

As if the divine gift of prophecy had descended upon me, at this moment out came Dan and Edmundson, carrying between them a

large crate!

“Go easy, boys!” Bazarada directed, following, and closing the door—which he appeared to lock. “This stuff is valuable. You’re not carrying coal!”

He passed me a bunch of keys as Dan and Edmundson loaded the crate onto the truck. And, under the eyes of the law, we started!



“Are you the foreman of this party?” the constable asked. “Sure,” Bazarada replied

**O**N THE following morning I searched the newspapers anxiously, expecting to find a bold headline: “Daring robbery in Bond Street.” But I found nothing.

“Rudimentary reasoning!” said Bazarada, when I arrived at Regent’s Park. “There was nothing else in the cupboard in Benimo’s office, and I left the cupboard locked as I found it. The chances of his opening it are negligible.”

We went into the workshop. Edmundson, looking hot but happy, was in there. He grinned as we entered.

I saw that a great part of the place was taken up by four massive packing cases. The name Bazarada was painted in red on all of them, and they were plastered with labels: “Fragile.” . . . “This side up.” . . . “Move with care.”

“In this one,” said Buzzy, pointing, “we have the authentic sarcophagus lid and the mummy.”

I stared uncomprehendingly.

“But what of the other three?”

“Examine any one of them you like, and tell me how, without using a jimmy, it could possibly be opened.” I examined one at random. It was a heavy oak case. I could see the heads of many long nails where the

top had been secured in place.

“Could you open it, sir?” Edmundson asked.

“Not with my bare hands.”

I glanced at Bazarada and saw his upper lip twitching.

“Look out of the window for a moment, Maurice.”

I looked out of the window.

“Turn around now.”

I turned. The top of the case had been opened like the lid of a box! I looked inside. The interior, thickly padded, was fitted as a bed with a comfortable pillow at one end.

“What’s this?” I exclaimed.

“For you, Maurice,” Bazarada murmured. “I hope you’ll be comfortable.”

“What!”

“There is plenty of ventilation but the air holes are concealed by the labels, which are printed on gauze.”

**A**MONG many strange memories of adventures shared with Bazarada, it is difficult to put my finger now upon that which touched the high point of the bizarre, but there were few to compare with the moment when, just before four o’clock that afternoon, Buzzy carried Laroo from the house down to the workshop. She was completely swathed in mummy wrappings!

Her features, which in the case of Cleopatra were covered by a fine gold mask, alone remained visible. And that bewitching face with widely opened violet eyes, looking out from the wrappings, sticks in my memory as something unbelievably grotesque.

“I’ll be stone-dead before we’re through, Buzzy,” she complained. “I know this is your idea of fun, but to me it’s plain hell.”

However, she was lifted into one of the padded boxes and made comparatively comfortable. The wrappings were one of Bazarada’s ingenious fakes, and actually Laroo’s arms were free. When the case was closed by Edmundson, it looked as though crowbars alone could open it.

My turn came, and I was secured in another case. I was more than mystified and not a little alarmed when I heard Bazarada’s voice

directing Edmundson and two other men:

"The big case first—very gently—the contents are priceless. Easy now!"

Heavy breathing and shuffling of footsteps indicated that the case was being carried out of the workshop to the truck which I knew was waiting. Then came my turn, and under Bazarada's directions the case containing me was lifted up and carried out.

As the strange business went on, I grew more and more mystified. That I was destined to spend a night inside the British Museum, I knew. But what was Buzzy supposed to do? I heard him talking and giving directions right up to the time that the truck moved away.

My feelings as I lay there and presently knew that I had been deposited in the museum, are indescribable. A number of people were moving about outside. Presently, I heard:

"Ah, Dr. Letchmere!" (Buzzy's voice). "It is good of you to spare the time. If I bring two of my own men along in the morning, perhaps you would look over these things for me?"

"I shall be delighted. But remember—I'm not infallible."

ACCORDING to Buzzy's instructions my costume was reduced to a vest, trousers and a pair of rubber-soled shoes. But nevertheless, largely imaginary, I began to experience a sense of suffocation. I became cramped. For what seemed like hours, there were people moving about me. As long as I could hear voices, I was afraid to move. I knew how to open my prison from the inside. It was a perfectly simple matter. But Buzzy had forbidden my doing so until I had the word from him.

The problem that was bothering me more and more was this: Where was Bazarada?

Silence came at last—followed by a dim sound of marching footsteps and the banging of many doors. Then:

"You say that the Anubis figure is in the big case?" came a voice which I recognized as that of Dr. Letchmere; and I knew that the doors communicating with the museum had been opened. "I am very keen to see it, Bazarada. Now I must hurry along. Coming my way?"

"I am going to walk," Buzzy's voice replied, "but my car is waiting. My man can drop you anywhere. Surely the museum staff has not yet left?"

“Oh, no! The librarians’ duties will detain them for at least another hour; and there is quite a lot of office work to clear up.”

“The place is not really given over to the watchmen until about—”

“Until about nine o’clock, I suppose.”

“Yes, I see.”

The voices died away. A dreadful silence fell. It was broken by a voice:

“Maurice! Can you hear me?”

“Yes, Laroo.”

“We’re going to—”

“Be quiet!” came Bazarada’s voice, low but very distinct. “I didn’t count on Dr. Letchmere keeping me talking in his office. Slipping him was difficult. Not another word—either of you.”

Silence . . . Then:

“I think we have an hour”—it was Buzzy’s voice. “Time to stretch ourselves—but no smoking.”

He was in the third case!

THE tedium of those hours of waiting I shall never forget. Several times we were visited by the patrol, but the visits were formal and brief. And then, at last, Bazarada called us to action.

Laroo sitting up in a constrained position, and I stepping out of the case to stretch my cramped limbs, Bazarada crossed silently to the doors which communicated with the Museum. He used the flashlight.

“This side of the door is fixed so that it closes automatically, Maurice,” he said. “I want you to hold it open. I’m going to take a look around. I may come back in a hurry.”

He fumbled for a moment with the lock—and the door was open. I held it as he slipped out. I saw a dim vista over which gigantic stone figures loomed, where pools of shadow lay; I seemed to come under the spell of ancient gods. Bazarada merged into these shadows.

I listened intently, but could hear no sound. I estimated that five minutes passed—seven minutes—ten minutes . . . and then a vague shape disentangled itself from the deeper shadow. Bazarada was beside me. “Come on,” he said; “the road’s clear. We’ll start now. Take the flash.”

We had rehearsed the elaborate routine that afternoon. Buzzy stooped, picked up Laroo lightly and placed her over his shoulder.

I grabbed up an imitation gold mask which had lain beside me in the case and followed. I placed a wedge which I had in my trouser pocket between the double doors, so that they could not wholly close. Having accomplished this and pocketed the flash I had to hurry to overtake Bazarada. I caught him on the stairs which led up to the Egyptian Rooms.

We mounted silently as ghosts. The place was eerily lighted, the shadows were grotesque. He set Laroo down, and addressed himself to the lock of the door.

I listened for footsteps, voices, fighting down panic. And presently the door of the Egyptian Room opened quite silently.

**B** AZARADA lifted Laroo and walked through the first room and into the second. One lamp was burning. It was uncanny to stand there in that half-light surrounded by the relics, the actual bodies, of those who had once been powerful in Egypt. Laroo's eyes appealed to me. As Bazarada stepped to the case which contained the synthetic mummy of Cleopatra—and without any apparent difficulty opened it—I moved up beside her.

"Don't look so frightened," I whispered. "You know Buzzy never slips up."

"I know he doesn't," she whispered back, "but do the police know it?"

Side by side we stood, Laroo, in her mummy wrappings and I in my vest and trousers, watching the master craftsman at work.

Delicately he disengaged the mummy, raising it inch by inch and finally getting it into a position where he could lift it bodily. When he signaled to me, I remembered my cue.

Squeezing Laroo's shoulder sympathetically, I handed the mask to Bazarada, shouldered the mummy and set out, along the Egyptian Room.

I imagined footsteps following me. I imagined voices below. I came to the door of the storeroom, my heart beating wildly, perspiration on my forehead.

In a state of frank terror, I carried out the rest of my routine, which consisted of placing the duplicate Cleopatra on a shelf in the big crate—the side of which was open. The real mummy lay below, and the bottom of the crate was occupied by the sarcophagus lid.

Long as this task seemed to take me, for I must work silently, I had finished it and was anxiously waiting when Bazarada returned.

“Just in the nick of time!” he said, breathlessly. “Patrol on the way!”

He closed the big case, closed that from which Laroo was missing, gave me a signal, and I retired to my hiding place. Three or four minutes later came the grating of a key in a lock; lights flashed as I saw, dimly, through the peephole.

The door was locked again—and there was silence.

Now came the worst ordeal of all. For I knew that Laroo lay in the case in the Egyptian Room, and I knew how frightened she would be when the watchman passed through. I had argued with Bazarada about the necessity of this, but he had convinced me.

“I can easily get the fake mummy out in a few minutes,” he had explained, “but it would be quite impossible to replace the real one in time. It’s going to be so difficult to fit it into the rests. A mummy can’t help. Laroo can adjust herself.”

At any moment I expected an outcry—the blowing of a police whistle—I did not know what. But nothing occurred.

“Don’t move, Maurice,” Buzzy warned. I lay still for minutes, every one of which held a thousand seconds, and then:

“All right,” I heard.

I opened the case and stepped out.

Bazarada placed a flashlight in position and we set to work. The mummy of Cleopatra was lifted from the big crate. I held the swing door open, and watched Bazarada place the mummy outside on the floor. He returned, and took out the painted sarcophagus lid. Shouldering the mummy he disappeared into the shadows. I fixed the wedge and, carrying the lid, followed him. Again Bazarada opened the door of the Egyptian Room. And presently I found myself, sarcophagus lid on shoulder, following him again.

Any break in the routine, now, would mean ruin. Breathing heavily, I watched Bazarada at work.

The mummy with its gold mask lying in the case in the center of the room was uncannily like that which I had removed. But as Bazarada raised the glass case, the mummy sat up and removed the mask.

“Buzzy,” said Laroo, “never ask me to do a thing like this again! I’m ruined. I’m a tired old woman.”

He lifted her out. Then together we raised the mummy. At this moment I recognized how delicate was the task of adjusting it properly. Before it was completed, Bazarada darted to the neighboring wall case. There came a faint scraping as he fumbled with the lock, and then—the door was open. “Routine, Maurice! I can do the rest here. This part is up to you!”

I lifted the painted lid from its place and laid it on the floor. Then I set the authentic lid there, and attached it to the fastenings which kept it upright against the wall. I reclosed the glass door and heard the catch snap.

Bazarada was still busy over the mummy. I suppose the click of the lock told him that I had accomplished this part of my duties, for:

“Jump, Maurice!” he whispered. “I have still a lot to do—and there’s nothing to cheer about until we’re back in Regent’s Park!”

Then I remembered my drill.

I shouldered the faked lid and stole back to the storeroom.

The interval which elapsed between the moment when I got the mummy into the big crate and the arrival of Bazarada was so long as to be agonizing. The setting of Cleopatra in her appointed place had proved a longer job than even Bazarada had anticipated.

When (Laroo, mummy - wrapped, draped across his shoulder) appeared, I could not control a gasp of relief.

“Quick!” His voice was hoarse. “It’s touch and go this time!”

He set down Laroo in her hiding place, closed the big crate, dashed back and removed the wedge from the door (part of my duty but I had forgotten it) and gave me an urgent signal.

I imprisoned myself.

No more than half a minute had elapsed when the patrol came in.

As footsteps one the stone floor died away:

“All right,” came Bazarada’s voice. “All out. One of the trickiest things I ever pulled off, Maurice!”

“Buzzy,” Laroo moaned, “we don’t have to stay here all night?”

“We don’t. And you were wonderful, Laroo. Your impersonation of a mummy was perfect!”

We went out through the office, relocking all doors behind us.

Dan drove up in Buzzy's car. We bundled in.

"At eight A.M.," said Buzzy, "I shall be here with the lorry to recover the four cases. I shall say that I have changed my mind about purchasing the contents. A most successful evening, Maurice."

"Most," Laroo murmured.

She was leaning up against my shoulder, half asleep.

**N**EXT morning the story of the Bond Street burglary broke into big headlines. Benimo had opened the cupboard. The exact nature of his loss was not mentioned.

Bazarada got in touch with Benimo. Tactfully he explained that, owing to his circle of acquaintances, he happened to know the man who had stolen the crate from the Gallery—and who now found the contents to be unmarketable, except to Benimo.

Benimo agreed to pay five thousand pounds ransom for the return of his property—and his property was duly returned.

His check had been cashed before he found out that he had paid for his own workmanship! And five hospitals received each a donation of one thousand pounds from Bazarada, "in recognition of skillful and unselfish labors."



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## **BLACK MAGIC**

**by Sax Rohmer**

Illustrated by Ronald McLeod

A master criminal meets a master magician—an adventure of  
Bazarada

Black Magic. Dispelled by Bazarada.

# Black Magic

By Sax Rohmer

ILLUSTRATED BY RONALD MACDOO

A master criminal meets a master magician—an adventure of Bazarada



HE IS one of the most cunning criminals alive," said Bazarada tensely; "that's all."

From the open window at which I stood, I could see a flowery headland and the blue sea of Funchal Harbor.

"I asked you to come out and meet me here, Maurice—I've sent Laroo and all the rest on back to England—because quite by accident I picked up certain information on the ship. I decided that the man known as Dr. Sarafan, highly respected resident of Madeira, and the notorious Servius Jerome were one and the same! I had had a long radiogram from my old friend Ned W. Regan in New York, asking me to look out for Jerome."

"So the man is up to his old tricks?"

"With a difference this time, Maurice! You say that the facts of the case had not been made public up to the time you left London, but briefly this man Jerome succeeded in getting Mary Copping, only daughter of Mark Copping, the drugstore millionaire, completely under his thumb. Mary was staying in London with her aunt, Mrs. Burton Dugan. Jerome was a regular visitor. He has some extraordinary power over women—and no one, it seems, knew of his foul reputation. Three weeks ago Mary disappeared—so did Jerome! Now, her father, back in New York, has been invited to pay a hundred thousand dollars—"

"Yes!" I turned and stared at him. "It's the most unique form of blackmail I ever heard of."

"A hundred thousand dollars *not* to marry the girl. It's certainly original! You see, the blackguard figures, once they are married, old

Coppinger will pay anything to secure a divorce. He has him both ways.”

“But you say he refused?”

“He instructed Ned, Regan right away and started for Europe. I radioed Regan to come here and I expect him and Mark Coppinger at almost any time. But the colossal impudence of Dr. Sarafan, as he is known in this town, amazes me.”

I was glad to know that Regan was coming. The most famous detective in the world is a sound ally, and Buzzy, who had no concrete evidence to support his case, had met with a cold reception from the authorities. Dr. Sarafan had a large *quinta* within easy distance of Funchal, which he occupied from time to time, and the civil governor had frankly laughed at Bazarada. The American consul had proved little more helpful. This, particularly, had irritated Buzzy. Then Dr. Sarafan in person had been announced; at that moment was ascending the stairs.

His card lay on the table: “Dr. Emmanuel Sarafan.”

Now the owner of the card was approaching the door, and both Buzzy and I were watching that door—for one of the most evil men alive was about to enter.

A peremptory knock sounded.

“Come in,” said Bazarada.

The door opened slowly and Servius Jerome walked into the room.

The mere act of writing the man's name fills me with something of the loathing which I had experienced when first I saw him. Scotland Yard has a stout dossier in its files respecting this unfrocked priest who had become a practicing black magician. Cunningly he had avoided criminal prosecution, but had been expelled from England, then from France.

THE man had deep knowledge allied to the instincts of Satan, and, in return for substantial sums, initiated his victims into strange rites. Ruin—in three cases, death—marked his footsteps through Europe. His notorious Temple of Adonis in Sicily had been secretly visited by Bazarada at the request of the parents of a girl whom Jerome had robbed of most of her possessions and then driven mad. Bazarada had succeeded in breaking up the unsavory organization.

And now Servius Jerome stood before us.

He was a man of no more than medium height, but of powerful frame, with massive, intellectual features and piercing dark eyes shadowed by craggy brows. He was rather bald in front but his graying dark hair grew long at the back. He was dressed in black and wore an unusual caped overcoat. In one slender white hand, upon which a conspicuous talismanic ring glittered, he held a wide-brimmed black hat.

He ignored my existence and stared across the room at Bazarada.

Words fail to convey the aura which surrounded him.

His face might have had the dignity of profound scholarship but for subtle lines that had scarred its beauty. Jerome was not a man to be ignored. He radiated evil. He was a figure of power. I doubt if any man living today has studied the dark mysteries of nature more deeply than Servius Jerome. If there be such a man I do not envy him.

Bazarada's fixed regard met the challenge of those strange eyes. Two powerful wills clashed.

"Well?" said Servius Jerome, and his voice betrayed his priestly training. "Have you anything to say to me, Bazarada?"

"Not yet," Buzzy replied quietly.

Jerome continued to watch him. Although it may sound a queer confession, I was glad he was not watching me. Frankly, there was something in this man's presence that I found terrifying.

"You crossed my path a year ago," he said, "thrusting yourself into my private affairs. The greatest experiment of my life you ruined, when you caused me to be expelled from Sicily. Bazarada, I never forgot. You are a conjurer—a vaudeville artist. You work with traps and mirrors and other mechanical devices. You call yourself a magician! What do you know of magic?"

Bazarada continued to watch him but did not speak.

"Magic is the power to control others, Bazarada. As Dr. Sarafan I have been known and respected in Madeira for many years. You have tried to tell the authorities that Dr. Sarafan is Servius Jerome. They laugh. Why? Because I have asserted my control. My magic above yours.

"You suspect that a certain lady wishes to marry me. You cannot understand—therefore you come here to interfere with me. You will be good enough to give your assurance that you will remain outside my affairs. Or, if you prefer, you will bear the consequences of your refusal."

Then Bazarada spoke. He did not stir; his heavy-lidded eyes scarcely

flickered.

“You have the impudence to suppose,” he said, “that you can abduct the daughter of a prominent United States citizen, and by means of your *magic* escape the consequences. You expose yourself, Jerome, to a form of retaliation which undoubtedly would do you good. In other words”—he suddenly stood up, and I saw Jerome's delicate fingers tighten upon the brim of the black hat—“unless you are out of this room in exactly fifteen seconds I am going to kick you downstairs!”

The almost unnatural composure of this master of the black arts did not for a moment desert him.

Servius Jerome slightly inclined his head, turned and went out. I heard his slow, retreating footsteps in the corridor.

“Tonight,” said Bazarada, “we are going to visit the Quinta de Santa Lucia. I have been there once but I want to see Mary Copping. . . .”



**A**ROUND us was moonlight and woodland. Look as far as I would at

straight, upstanding pines, nothing stirred in the mystic blue light. Left of the mountain road was sheer rock. Above and beyond, the forest climbed to some peak we could not see.

Higher we mounted and higher. There were awkward corners where we seemed to overhang tree-clad slopes, hairpin bends above dizzy pine tops. For a long time Bazarada drove in silence, then:

“We are nearly there, Maurice,” he said. “We have to walk the last lap. The sound of the car would ruin our plans.”

There came a sort of moon-bathed clearing in the woodland and Buzzy drove into a shadowy bay. We got out.

We set out along a mere forest track, Bazarada using a flashlight to guide us. This path mounted very steeply. And I stumbled in his wake.

“There must be some other way to the place,” I said.

“There is,” he replied curtly. “But we dare not use it.”

A few paces farther and shadow gave place to bright moonlight. Bazarada snapped off the light.

“Look,” he said, “there is the Quinta de Santa Lucia.”

I stood beside him looking in the direction he indicated. A low, rambling building, obviously of great age, overhung a deep ravine. Moonlight poured down upon it like molten silver.

“It was on what used to be a main road, but a road now barely used; and it was formerly a guest house connected with a monastery of which no trace remains. Look! There's a car driving up now.”

I watched. The headlights of the car came slowly around a precipitous road and disappeared into the shadows of the building.

“A visitor for Servius Jerome.”

“Probably the priest. Mary Coppinger was under age, and an heiress, when Jerome induced her to go away. Therefore he laid himself open to prosecution for *abduction!* But tomorrow is her twenty-first birthday. If he succeeds in marrying her, the case will become complicated. This way.”

He extended his hand and led me, otherwise I could never have followed the crazy path which we pursued, and which I divined he had explored earlier. It led to a sort of outbuilding, formerly, as I saw, a stable, and here we pulled up.

“Stand by, Maurice,” said Buzzy.

I listened to a familiar fumbling. We were hidden by a belt of black shadow cast by the full moon; then:

“Inside! Quick!” I heard.

I found myself in a place, illuminated by Bazarada's flashlight, which, as I had assumed, had at one time afforded accommodation for quite a dozen horses.

“Follow on,” Buzzy instructed; “walk softly.”

AT THE end of the place there was more fumbling—and another door had magically been opened.

“Stairs!” Bazarada whispered.

We mounted a number of stairs.

“Take the torch. I am uncertain of this lock.”

I directed the ray upon the lock of a great iron-studded door which no man but Bazarada would have dreamed of attempting to force. About us all was silent; but I was apprehensive of the very silence. I watched him at work as so often I had watched, and suddenly the door was open.

“Sorry for the delay,” he murmured. “An old-fashioned Portuguese lock for which I was not looking. Go easy now—we are in the house of Servius Jerome.”

In the torchlight I saw a corridor, the floor covered with coarse matting; heavy beams and rough plaster work took me back to the age in which this corridor had been planned.

“Step softly! If there is anyone in the room we are going to, the success or failure of our visit turns upon silencing him.”

He opened an unlocked door and stared into a small room. There was a lighted opening on the farther side. It resembled an opera box and I saw that it was empty.

“I had come provided,” Buzzy whispered, “but it is unnecessary. Close the door. Don't bolt it.”

I did as he directed, turned and looked in the direction of the light.

Below me was a small chapel.

“I anticipated a chapel,” said Bazarada softly. “It is characteristic. Servius Jerome, as you know, poses as a high priest of some religion purely of his own invention. I assume that it is here, tomorrow, that

the wedding is planned to take place. I wonder if the priest will be a real priest? This we must find out. I deduce that he will be. A legal marriage would suit Jerome's purpose."

I was about to move when Bazarada gripped my arm tightly.

Servius Jerome, wearing a cassock and a purple biretta, walked silently in at the back of the altar.

With all the reverence of a priest performing his duties, he attended to the flame, rearranged the flowers, knelt for a moment, and went out again.

"I am tempted to suppose," Bazarada whispered, "that this man has begun to believe in his own religion. A brilliant madman is a most dangerous opponent."

We retired without let or hindrance.

Bazarada, who in times of urgency had a swift, silent, Indianlike walk, seized my hand and led me around the south angle of the building. Sometimes I was tempted to believe that Buzzy could see in the dark. We moved at great speed through impenetrable shadow. From time to time he would mutter: "Duck your head—overhanging branch," and then—"Three steps up—be careful."

It was a queer experience. For if *I* could not see where we were going, how could Buzzy see ?

I presently recognized that we stood upon a tree-clad bank from which, over the top of a high wall, one could command a view of beautiful moonlit gardens.

There was a terraced garden, graced by flowering trees. There were beds of roses. Somewhere, a fountain was playing. I had just begun to speak, when:

"Quiet!" Buzzy said urgently. "Look!"

A girl was approaching us, coming up the steps from a lower terrace to one immediately below the wall. She wore a soft, robe-like dress, and the moonlight glittered on her fair hair.

Suddenly, Buzzy was no longer at my side.

I stared right and left into shadow. I could see nothing, hear nothing. Then I saw him, a crouching silhouette on top of the old wall, and heard his quiet voice:

"Mary."

The girl stopped. I saw her look up. She was pretty, but her beauty

was of the kind which has no strength of character behind it. She had large childish eyes and a petulant, full-lipped mouth. Her expression was that of a sleepwalker.

“Yes?” she said in a dreamy voice, which contained no note of alarm.

“Your father has sent me to look for you, Mary.”

Mary Coppinger continued to look up.

“Why?” she asked. “I am very happy. Tell Father that I am very happy.”

She disappeared from my view, but presently I could hear the sound of footsteps walking along the path directly under the wall. Huzzy's silhouette vanished. A moment later he was beside me.

“You see, Maurice,” he said, speaking a little breathlessly, “she is completely in the man's power. And she is not the first. Tomorrow is her twenty-first birthday, but at the time of her abduction she was a minor. Ned Regan has a warrant for Jerome's arrest. It looks as though we were helpless until Ned arrives.”

**A**NOTHER of those blind marches led by my friend, who could see in the dark, and we were back where the car was hidden. We had just climbed in and Buzzy was about to start when a man came racing up the road toward us.

“Sit tight,” said Bazarada. “I don't think we can be seen here.”

I saw now that a second man followed the first. One glimpse I had in the moonlight of the two runners. Both were swarthy fellows. Suddenly the first runner stooped, picked up a big stone and turned swiftly. The second man carried a knife. I saw its flash as he threw it . . . but he was too late.

The stone, hurled with terrific force, struck him squarely between the eyes. He staggered back, seemed to crumple up, and slumped face downward on the path. The stone thrower, with never another glance, turned and ran on up a narrow lane.

“Good God!” I muttered.

“Although it's none of our business,” said Buzzy, “I think we should see if there's anything we can do.”

We jumped out. He held my arm for a moment, listening. Receding footsteps grew faint in the distance.

A very brief examination was sufficient. The man was dead.

"This is a ghastly business!" I spoke in a low voice. "What do we do?"

"In the circumstances," said Bazarada, "I think this is where we beat it. Since there is no other house to my knowledge within two miles, I assume that the murderer and the murdered were servants of Jerome. Remembering that he formerly had a temple in Sicily, I suspect that they were Sicilians. I am not without sympathy for the stonethrower."

We set out for Funchal. It was a roundabout and, at night, an exciting route.

Perhaps in my many experiences with Bazarada I never had quite such a shock as that which awaited me when we arrived at the hotel. Two policemen in Offenbach uniforms, and a plain-clothes officer, were standing in the lobby when we entered. The manager, much perturbed, asked us all to step into his office.

"I am sure," he exclaimed, "that there is some terrible mistake."

"No mistake, I think," said the plainclothes officer, speaking very good English.

"Is your name Bazarada?"

"It is."

"I hold a warrant for your arrest."

"You must be mad!" I said.

"Upon what charge?" Bazarada asked quietly.

"Upon the charge of having murdered, tonight, Pietro Ascani, a servant of Dr. Sarafan."

I experienced a sudden chill.

"Of course there is some terrible error,"

the manager cried, "some frightful misunderstanding."

"On what evidence has this warrant been issued?" Bazarada asked.

"Dr. Sarafan lodged the information. He is at headquarters now."

Bazarada looked at me.

"Be silent, Maurice," he said smiling—but his eyes flashed an urgent message. "Do nothing. Say nothing. Try nothing. Wait for Ned Regan . . . I am at your service. Officer."

**O**N THE way to police headquarters I reviewed the situation. It was appalling enough. I realized that one of those occurrences which are

fate's practical jokes had been instantly turned to advantage by Servius Jerome. Perhaps the murderer had seen us after all—or perhaps, secretly, Jerome himself had been watching. Whichever the true explanation might be, the plain fact remained that Buzzy's freedom depended upon my word being accepted against that of Jerome—probably reinforced by other lying witnesses!

The officer on duty in the ancient and gloomy building in which presently I found myself had exactly that air of smug self-sufficiency and absence of common sense which infuriates me. Dr. Sarafan had been unable to wait, but had made a written deposition. Throughout, Bazarada remained perfectly calm.

“But.” I shouted at one stage of the proceedings, “the statement of Dr. Sarafan as recorded is an absolute fabrication!”

“Maurice!” Buzzy said sternly.

“It appears.” the official went on, ignoring my outburst, “that the dead man detected the accused on the premises of Dr. Sarafan, and, endeavoring to detain him, met his death at the accused's hands. He was struck down with a stone, picked up on the roadside. Police officers are now investigating the scene of the murder. In the meantime—”

He banged a bell that stood upon his desk.

The two police who had called at the hotel stepped into the office. There followed a rapid order in Portuguese, a language of which I understood very little. I saw Bazarada smile. In response to a tap on the shoulder he nodded to me, turned and walked out between the two policemen. The door closed.

A third policeman, whom I strongly suspected of representing the remainder of the force on duty, appeared at my elbow. He tapped me on the shoulder.

I was boiling with indignation when I reached the British consul. I dragged him out from a dinner party remorselessly, and he listened to the story I had to tell.

“It's a remarkable story, Mr. Roder,” he admitted, incredulity in his frank blue eyes. “Dr. Sarafan, who spends, I suppose, some three or four months of the year in his villa here, is admittedly a mysterious figure. He is carrying out, I understand, certain important experiments. He is well thought of and much respected in Funchal. You must realize that in a murder charge bail is not allowed. And, as I see the matter, it is your word—which, believe me, I don't doubt—against that of Dr. Sarafan. What can I do?”

It was my first experience of that curious apathy which claims residents in these lotus eaters' islands. In this emergency, I realized, I stood quite alone.

My attempt to obtain an interview with the governor of the island resulted in an unmistakable rebuff.

ON MY way back from this in a state of furious irritation, I feverishly reviewed the facts. The wretched Mary Coppinger was obviously in the power of Servius Jerome. Short of kidnaping her, I could see no hope of saving her from the man. The charge of abduction, upon which Ned Regan had succeeded in obtaining a warrant for Jerome's arrest, might possibly have prevented the marriage had Regan arrived in time. But that it would result in any action being taken against Jerome, I doubted. In some way, Coppinger, or his representatives, had managed to suppress the story of Mary's disappearance. In the circumstances this did not help matters.

I was still puzzling over these things and the plight of Bazarada when I stepped into the lobby of the hotel.

Servius Jerome stood up to meet me!

"Mr. Roder," he said, and I found myself falling under the spell of his strange eyes, "I have waited for you for a purpose."

There was no one else in the lobby—and clearly he read my thoughts, for:

"What could it avail?" he asked quietly; "I am no weakling. Even supposing that you knocked me out, in what way would this benefit Mary Coppinger or Bazarada?"

In the empty lobby I stood silent, watching him.

"You have presumed to come between me and the woman I intend to marry—"

It was on the tip of my tongue to say: "The woman you love so well that you offered to accept a hundred thousand dollars *not* to marry her"—but, in the nick of time, wiser counsel checked me.

"I am a stickler for the letter of the law. My fiancée comes of age tomorrow. The wedding takes place at the somewhat unusual hour of eight o'clock in the morning. Be good enough to respect my wishes in the matter, and to refrain from interfering with my personal affairs. Your friend Bazarada is in an unhappy position. I have influence here. I might withdraw the charge against him if he, on his part, agreed to

leave Madeira without causing me further trouble. Are you disposed, Mr. Roder, to make this promise on his behalf?"

"I am not."

"In the circumstances, then, I have no alternative but to proceed to the prison and to interview Bazarada in person."

"You are welcome."

"Perhaps you would care to accompany me?"

"I would accompany you nowhere, unless possibly to your execution. You are a scoundrel whose name stinks throughout Europe. A kidnaper, a blackmailer. Yet, here you stand before me, and I am helpless."

I suppose I was taunting him, trying to tempt him to attack me; for I was fighting mad. But, slightly inclining his head, he walked out of the lobby—a sinister, black-cloaked figure.

I FELL into a troubled sleep with Bazarada's strange injunction, "Do nothing Say nothing. Try nothing—wait for Ned Regan," going round and round in my brain like a refrain. A loud banging on the door awakened me.

Springing up, I glanced at my watch. The hour was 4 A. M.

The banging on the door continued. I got out of bed, crossed and opened the door.

The burly form of Ned W. Regan confronted me.

"Hello, Mr. Roder!" he exclaimed, and grasped my hand in a mighty grip. "What's this I hear? We anchored forty-five minutes back. Passengers don't come ashore earlier than nine. But ship's orders don't apply to Ned Regan. Mr. Coppinger's here with me and the American consul's right downstairs. He didn't want to come—but he's here!"

Now I was wide awake.

"Mr. Regan! Thank God, you've arrived! Bazarada's in jail."

"So I'm told."

Ned Regan thoughtfully flicked a lighter into action and rekindled a fragment of cigar.

"We must get him out."

"Buzzy can wait," Regan replied, returning the lighter to his pocket. "What we must do is this: You know this hideaway in the hills, where

the man Jerome, or Sarafan as he calls himself, has smuggled the girl? That's our objective, sir. And we're going to send up blue fireworks in this little island!"

The presence of the big man was inspiring. When I got down to the lobby I found the manager, hastily dressed, standing there. Mr. Coppinger, a quiet, gray-haired New Englander, whose glance told the whole story of the agony he had suffered, met me. Thurston—the American consul with whom Bazarada had come to loggerheads—greeted me rather coldly.

"I've stirred everybody up," Ned Regan bellowed, "but we won't wait for 'em. Come along. We're off for the hideout in the hills."

In two cars, which the restless energy of Ned W. Regan had conjured up at that hour of the morning in a sleepy town, we set out for the Quinta de Santa Lucia. I traveled in the leading car, Ned Regan beside me.

At the point where, on my previous visit, Bazarada had parked the car, I indicated a narrow lane which led to the proper entrance.

Knocking and ringing for a time produced no result. Then the door was opened.

I beheld the yellow face of the Sicilian who had murdered his fellow countryman before my eyes! He was obviously frightened.

"Please, what is it?" he inquired.

The American consul replied in fluent Portuguese. The man answered him with much waving of hands.

"He says," Thurston explained, "that something terrible has happened. His master, Dr. Sarafan, is missing."

"That's not terrible," bellowed Regan, "it's just normal—what I expected! He's got wind I'm here!"

"But the doctor's fiancée, so he describes her, is also missing," Thurston continued.

"What!"

"They were to be married in the chapel at eight o'clock. The priest is already in the house."

He spoke again in Portuguese, and the man excitedly replied.

"Dr. Sarafan returned home late last night. He admitted himself with his key and went straight up to his study. This man saw him on the stairs. He turned all lights out and went to bed."

“What then?”

“He was awakened by a scream. You must know, Mr. Regan, that one of the servants was murdered here last night. The household is naturally restless. They thought it came from the room occupied by—”

“My daughter!” Mark Coppinger whispered—“It was Mary! Good God! This is awful. Please go on, Mr. Thurston. What does the man say?”

“He says, Mr. Coppinger, that they rushed to her room. The room was empty, although the bed had been slept in. They then hurried to Dr. Sarafan's room. There was no one there!”

“What time was that?”

“Just after three A.M.”

Two windows opened somewhere above, I saw heads peeping out.

“A hell of a story!” Ned Regan roared. “Come on, Roder — we'll search the place!”

“I warn you that you have no powers,” Thurston exclaimed.

“Powers be damned!” said Ned Regan.

He, myself, Mark Coppinger and one of the two drivers searched the house.

Neither Dr. Sarafan nor Mary Coppinger was in the Quinta de Santa Lucia.

**F**UNCHAL was coming to life when we regained its outskirts. Ned Regan was furious.

I told him all I knew of the murder charge upon which Bazarada lay in jail.

“Two canary birds fighting out their private quarrels!” Ned Regan shouted above the roar of the motor. “This scoundrel saw his chance and took it quick! He used it as a frame-up to get rid of Buzzy, that's clear enough. It worked. We know where Buzzy is. What's bothering me is this: Where's the man Jerome? Where's Mary?”

By the time we reached the jail, Ned Regan's early activities had borne fruit. A representative of the governor awaited us, and we were admitted immediately. Mr. Coppinger was reduced to a pitiable state.

“Wait here, Mr. Coppinger,” said Regan as we entered. “Just sit quiet. She's somewhere on the island and we'll get her.”

“It is next to impossible that she should have left,” Thurston

murmured. "The American freighter Dahomey sailed at half past four this morning—but she carries no passengers."

"Then forget it," said Regan.

We walked along a gloomy stone corridor, Regan following the man who held the keys. I came next with Thurston. The police officer and the governor's representatives brought up the rear. Our footsteps echoed hollowly as we descended stone steps. Before a frowning door we paused. A key was inserted in the lock. The door swung open.

I saw a gloomy dungeon. One high, barred window admitted scanty light.

Ned Regan rushed in.

"Buzzy!" he shouted. "Buzzy!"

There was no reply.

"Let's have more light! I can't see a thing in here!"

THE man with the keys flashed a light upon the bed. A man was lying there, inert, face to the wall. I recognized Bazarada's white linen suit.

Then Regan turned him over. His wrists were lashed together—so were his ankles. A cloth was bound over his mouth.

"But what is this?" the governor's deputy asked.

"It's a damned outrage!" Ned Regan cut the lashings and removed the gag.

Eyes bloodshot, glaring, Servius Jerome struggled upright and confronted us!

He was beyond speech, himself, and he was greeted by a silence of stupefaction. It was broken by a loud, harsh voice—the voice of one who, however astounding the circumstances, keeps his head and keeps his job clearly in view.

"I have a warrant for your arrest, Servius Jerome, otherwise Emmanuel Sarafan! My name is Ned W. Regan!"

In upon the babel that ensued broke a call from outside the cell:

"Radio message for Mr. Roder."

I turned. One of the Offenbach policemen was holding up an envelope. I sprang rather than walked into the gloomy corridor and opened the message. This is what I read:

FROM S. S. DAHOMEY

TO MAURICE RODER, REID'S HOTEL OR FUNCHAL JAIL. BOUND  
FOR LAS PALMAS. WILL WAIT THERE. HAVE MARY COPPINGER  
WITH ME.

BAZARADA

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*Collier's* , August 6 1938

# DEATH IN THE KING'S ROOM

by Sax Rohmer

Illustrated by Ronald McLeod

An old and haunted house, and deadly peril—to whom? But  
who, except the great Bazarada, would conduct such fantastic  
adventure?

Bazarada trails a ghost



The ray of light showed me a distracted Laroo. Wearing pajamas, her eyes wide with horror, she burst into the corridor.

The ray of light showed me a distracted Laroo. Wearing pajamas, her eyes wide with horror, she burst into the corridor.

**I** REGRET," said Malcolm Brissard, "that the family ghost has disappointed; but there is still time."

We were a party of five. The dining room of Laley Old Place had been built for a banqueting hall, and marooned around that island of light in a sea of shadows we seemed to be oddly cut off from reality. Malcolm Brissard at the head of the table had Laroo on one side and Buzzy on the other. Aylmer, Malcolm's cousin, and myself, made up the party.

Buzzy, as Brissard spoke, looked curiously from face to face.

I could see him studying the clean-cut features of Malcolm Brissard, tanned by years in the African veldt, the pale and more refined face of his cousin, in which, nevertheless, a distinct family likeness might be traced.

Laroo, wearing a green dinner frock—she knew that green suited her dark beauty admirably—was staring right ahead into the shadows.

Malcolm Brissard was staring at Laroo. Buzzy glanced at me and smiled his thin-lipped smile.

"I don't despair," he said, his clear, cold voice echoing weirdly about the huge room. "I have enjoyed every moment of my stay."

"It has been grand to have you here," Brissard assured him; but it seemed to me that the words were addressed to Laroo.

"I have always wanted to live in a haunted house," Laroo murmured dreamily.

The fact that Laley Old Place was haunted accounted for our presence there that night. The death of Burton Brissard, head of the Brissard Steamship Company, who had died unmarried some six months before, had brought about a great change in the fortunes of his nephew, our host. The eccentric old man had instructed his solicitors to destroy his will only a few days before a heart attack carried him off. Hence Malcolm Brissard's sudden accession to fortune—for he was next of kin.

"The traditional ghost of Laley Old Place," he continued in his enthusiastic, almost boyish way, persistently glancing at Laroo, "is the Laley Minstrel, of course. On certain occasions he is reported to have been seen coming out from the trees beyond the orchard where at one time there was a chapel, and walking toward the house. Records on the subject report that he melts into the stone wall of the west wing."

"I'd just love to see him," Laroo murmured, "or hear him."

"Alymer, here," Brissard went on, turning to his cousin, "has the whole thing pat. You see, he stayed in the office; in fact, he was Uncle Burt's right-hand man whilst I was wandering about Africa. What's the story of the west wing, Aylmer?"

"It's really very curious," Aylmer Brissard replied, "because it is fairly well authenticated." He had a cultured but tired voice, a contrast to the brusque and rather harsh tones of his cousin. "The west wing is the earliest part of Laley Old Place, and the Laley family to whom it belonged for generations—a family now extinct—had a pretty lurid history. There used to be a secret staircase at the point where the ghost disappears, leading to the room now known as the armory. This staircase has been built up for generations."

Bazarada and Malcolm Brissard had struck up a firm friendship on the liner on which they had both returned from South Africa. A few weeks later, Brissard having entered into occupation of Laley Old Place and Bazarada concluding an engagement in Manchester, we found ourselves assembled here, at Brissard's request, to investigate the

reappearance of the Laley Minstrel—a phantom who had long ceased to trouble the house.

“It will take me years to know this place as Aylmer knows it,” said Malcolm. “Even now, I can’t believe that it belongs to me! On my instructions he went to work and had done a hundred and one things even before I got back from Africa. There was no electric light, for example. Every room is properly lighted now. There’s still no central heating—and we need it in the Peak district. But that’s a big job and will have to wait a while.”

“I understand,” said Bazarada. “that Hample, the butler, was here for a great part of your late uncle’s time?”

“Yes,” Aylmer replied. “Hample is an old servant of the family. Burton Brissard had a flat in London, and spent more time there than he did in Derbyshire. Hample and his wife—she acted as cook-housekeeper—often had the place to themselves for months on end.”

**I** STARTED violently. The atmosphere of that huge dining room, perhaps, was getting on my nerves. From just behind me came a dry cough.

As I twisted around in my chair:

“As you say, Mr. Aylmer,” a soft voice broke in, “we have been much alone in the old house.”

It was Hample, the butler, who had entered unseen, unheard. With his scanty gray hair, regular features and slight side whiskers, he was so like a traditional butler that I found it hard to believe in him.

Bazarada, facing me across the table, fixed his strange eyes upon the man who stood at my elbow, and said:

“Did you ever see or hear anything unusual during that time?”

“Nothing, sir. It was often very difficult to keep up the house staff, because of the queer stories they got to hear. My wife and myself have sometimes been quite alone in Laley Old Place. Nothing ever happened. I never heard nor saw a thing until two weeks ago tonight, when I was serving Mr. Malcolm, who was dining alone.”

“You’ll have to get out of the way of calling me Mr. Malcolm,” said our host laughingly.

“Yes, sir, I shall. It’s just a habit. But on that night, sir, as you remember—”

“Remember!” cried Malcolm. “Can I ever forget! I’ve heard it twice

since, too.”

“I know the story,” said Bazarada quietly, “but I should like to hear your version of it, Hample.”

“Well, sir, it was certainly the Laley Minstrel. I am afraid that it so affected me that I dropped something.”

“Yes!” said Malcolm—“gravy!”

“It was like a kind of harping, sir! It seemed to be here, there and everywhere. It was certainly somewhere in this room.”

“Was it unpleasant?” Bazarada went on.

“Well, sir, I couldn’t say it was unpleasant. In a sort of way it was beautiful. But it was—well—very uncanny!”

HE SET upon the table a salver laden with decanters and liqueurs.

“By the way,” said Bazarada, turning to Aylmer, “have you got that old plan of the house I asked you to find for me?”

“Yes,” Aylmer replied, “it’s upstairs on my desk.” He beckoned to the butler. “Slip up to the armory, Hample, for me; there’s a very large envelope on the desk—you can’t mistake it. Bring it down.” As Hample turned to go he added, “Shut the window while you’re there. The wind is rising.”

The butler went out as silently as he had come in. In the circumstances, there was no question of the one lady guest retiring. When cigars and cigarettes were passed around, Laroo selected a Turkish cigarette and Malcolm lighted it. Bazarada watched her under drooping eyelids.

“That’s your last tonight,” he said grimly. “You are getting to smoke like a factory chimney.”

Laroo gave Buzzy a venomous glance and, leaning back in her chair so that she was almost in shadow, made a contemptuous *moue* which necessitated the use of the tip of her tongue, with a grace I should not have supposed possible in such a gesture.

Aylmer Brissard stood up.

“Excuse me for a moment,” he said, smiling, “but I have just remembered that I locked the plan in the safe before dressing for dinner.”

He went out.

"I have heard that damnable harping three times," Malcolm said in a low voice. "Twice in the Green Room and once here. Hample is right about its character. It's musical in a way—but there's no shape or form about it. It's the most ungodly—"

Abruptly he ceased speaking—so abruptly that I was reminded of what would happen if a man were to be suddenly gagged.

An icy silence descended upon us all. I experienced a momentary shudder—a chilling of the blood. For some reason I fixed my eyes on Bazarada—looking to him alone.

For in upon the silence broke a sound unlike any I had ever heard—in that place and at that time a ghostly, unbelievable thing. Preceded by a howling, like the howling of wind, it came. At one moment it resembled soft playing upon several violins, then it died away to a weird whisper. . . . It increased again. So also did the wailing. It was like a phantom church organ. It rose and fell as though the Laley Minstrel crept around us in the shadows. . . .

In its beauty terror lay.

I saw that Bazarada was watching Laroo.

"Buzzy!" she gasped, and started up from her chair. "Buzzy! Oh, my God! What is it?"

There was a moment of electric tension, and then I heard a door opening. I saw Malcolm Brissard staring past me. The sound of phantom harping had died away.

"Did you hear it, Hample?" he cried sharply.

"Yes, sir," the butler replied. "I was on my way down from the armory when I heard it. I'd been looking for the long envelope."

Aylmer's voice came from a distant doorway.

"Sorry, Hample—I had locked it away. I went up by the other stair. I heard the minstrel, too, as I came down."

"That makes the fourth time!" said Malcolm. He turned to his cousin. "You never heard this abominable harping, or whatever it is, during the years that you lived here?"

"Never," Aylmer replied. He appeared to be much disturbed by the uncanny occurrence. "It's quite new to me—and horrible!"

He set a long envelope on the table beside Bazarada. There was complete silence, now, in the big, shadowy room.

"You have always heard this sound here, in this dining room?"

Bazarada's cool voice was a sedative.

"Once here before, sir, yes."

It was the butler who answered.

"But *I* have heard it twice in my bedroom!" said Malcolm. "If I hear it again I'll have to quit! Aylmer had prepared the King's Room for me. It's the room in which Charles II is said to have slept on his way to the Battle of Worcester. My uncle used it—but it's too imposing for me! All the same, if I can't rest in the Green Room it will have to be the King's Room."

**"B**AZARADA was the sworn enemy of hocus-pocus. He had studied voodoo in Africa and in Haiti, had consorted with fakirs and mahatmas. He admitted the existence of forces inherent in humanity but undeveloped by most of us.

Apart from certain cases that he conceded belonged to another category, he was unprepared to accept ghostly manifestations.

"I am afraid some of the staff heard it tonight, sir," Hample continued, "and so I fear, except for my wife and myself, that you will be without service tomorrow."

Aylmer shook his head. He looked more than usually pale, I thought. The queer manifestation that had so upset Laroo seemed also to have disturbed him very much.

"We have sounded the walls and panels at that end of the room," he said in a low voice, "and although there seems to be a space behind the woodwork, we found no means of entry."

"Did the same in the Green Room," Malcolm jerked. "Short of stripping down to the timbers, it would be impossible to explore behind."

Bazarada's heavy lids were lowered so that his eyes were mere slits.

"I should be glad," he said, addressing Malcolm Brissard, "if you would permit my friend Maurice and myself to retire for a short consultation. I am deeply interested—and I want to make further and private investigations."

When we were finally alone Bazarada stared at me and his stare was disconcerting.

After a time, he spoke: "Were you ever in the Malay country?"

This abrupt question came as a shock.

“No. Why.”

“Well—if you weren’t—it doesn’t matter. I may take it that you never heard of the singing reed?”

“The singing reed? No—what is it?”

“In my opinion, Maurice, it’s something curiously like the Laley Minstrel!”

I stared, but could think of nothing to say.

“I have been at some pains,” Bazarada went on. “I started my inquiries before I left Manchester—to obtain all particulars about Laley Old Place. It belongs without doubt to the somewhat extensive list of haunted houses in the Peak district of Derbyshire. The Laley Minstrel dates back to the Middle Ages. His harping is supposed to herald the death of someone in the house. I have read up his record. And I hope”—he held up the long envelope that contained the old plan—to learn more from this.”

“You seem to know quite a lot already.”

“When Malcolm’s invitation reached me in Manchester I set inquiries afoot immediately. Then I wired you. Here we are!”

I STOOD up from the armchair in which I was seated, crossed the room and threw open the window. It overlooked the orchard to which Malcolm had referred during the evening, and beyond which formerly there had been a chapel. I stared out.

From selected points, Laley Old Place was visible for miles around—it stood upon a considerable eminence. South of the orchard at which I was looking the ground fell away very steeply, for instance, so that, turning my head slightly to the left, I could see the tops of trees in the valley below.

Came Bazarada’s voice from behind me:

“What direction is the wind, Maurice?”

“Westerly, I should say.”

“It’s always westerly when the minstrel plays . . .”

I turned sharply.

“What do you mean?”

“I got exact dates from Malcolm and I called up the Air Ministry. On all three occasions when the minstrel had been heard, there was wind

. . . and the wind was a west wind!”

“Possibly a coincidence.”

Bazarada’s top lip tightened.

“And possibly not! You notice that wide ledge to the left of your window, Maurice? It ends at a balcony—the balcony of the room known as the armory—now used by Aylmer as a workroom. Four feet below the balcony is a red-tiled penthouse roof. The building is a potting shed. There’s pipe from there to a rain-water tank below. It’s an easy way down and an easy way up. Wear tennis shoes.”

“You mean—”

“I mean that when everyone is safely asleep I will meet you outside the potting shed.”

We went into the billiard room, which opened out of the haunted dining room. Laroo lay on a settee half in shadow, her chin cupped in one hand and high heels raised in the air. She was disinterestedly watching the play and steadily munching chocolates.

Bazarada suggested that when the last two points had been made it might be a good idea to turn on the radio. Malcolm was enthusiastically in favor.

“Reception is bad about here,” he said; “it seems to be a sort of blind spot on this slope. Aylmer has been tinkering with it for weeks, haven’t you, old man?”

“Yes,” Aylmer Brissard replied vaguely, and missed the shot, giving Malcolm the game.

We returned to a rather barely furnished lounge that occupied a great part of the south front, and managed to pick up some dance music. Malcolm was a fine dancer; and in Laroo he certainly had a charming partner.

Aylmer danced only once. I smoked my pipe and watched Bazarada.

He was seated in an armchair, studying the scene under drooping eyelids. When presently we broke up for the night, Laroo, who had been allotted a double bedroom, insisted that Mrs. Hample should occupy the second bed.

“After all I heard tonight,” she said, “I just couldn’t close my eyes. I shall see harps everywhere, even if I don’t hear them.”

Back in my room I prepared for my meeting with Bazarada. As the party had separated for the night:

“Look out for me from your window,” he had whispered. “It won’t be before midnight. My route is more tricky than yours, and I have to be careful.”

It was five minutes to twelve when I extinguished the light and groped my way in darkness to the window overlooking the orchard. At any moment now I expected to see Bazarada on the gravel path below me. I craned out, and as I did so—

“Buzzy!” I heard, in a hysterical shriek—”Maurice!—Buzzy! For God’s sake—*hurry!*”

It was Laroo!

Her room was on the same floor but right at the end of the long corridor. All else forgotten, I dashed to the door and rushed out. I had no idea of the position of the switches. Therefore I turned on my flashlight and ran headlong for the end of the passage.

A door burst open. . . . The ray of light showed me a distracted Laroo.

Wearing pajamas, her eyes wide with horror, she burst out into the corridor and, seeing me, staggered forward and threw her arms about my neck.

“Maurice!” she whispered, “Maurice!” She was trembling. “Someone—something—crept past the window! I was wide awake! I was not dreaming!”

**M**RS. HAMPLE, normally a red-faced, healthy person, now appeared, dragging a dressing gown over her night attire. She was pale and at least as frightened as Laroo.

“True, sir!” she whispered. “Miss Laroo’s cry wakened me, but I saw it, too!”

“*What* did you see?”

There came sounds of scurrying footsteps. First on the scene was Malcolm, wearing a striking red dressing gown. Lights sprang up. Then came Hample; close behind him, Aylmer.

Clinging to me:

“Where’s Buzzy?” Laroo whispered.

“I don’t know, dear—possibly fast asleep.”

“What’s the matter?”

Malcolm Brissard dashed up, pale and grim, his eyes fixed upon Laroo.

“Something on the balcony outside our window, sir,” Mrs. Hample replied. Her voice still held a note of terror. “It was crouching and walking very softly! . . . I couldn’t help thinking, sir—perhaps it’s because of the things that have happened—but I couldn’t help thinking it looked . . . like a very old man, walking with a stoop!”

“I am afraid you good people are imagining things,” Aylmer interrupted. “You have all heard the queer music, and the rest, I feel —”

“What’s going on here?” came Bazarada’s cool voice.

Laroo turned—as he came out of the door of his room, wearing a dressing gown that was even more brilliant than our host’s.

“Buzzy!” Laroo cried, and ran to him. “How could you sleep through it?”

A formal search was made, but all windows proving to be fastened, the search was abandoned.

“Mrs. Hample,” said Laroo, “I know a wonderful new kind of patience. Will you play it with me?—because I can never sleep a wink tonight!”

As I headed for my room, the disturbance having subsided:

“Bad luck!” said Bazarada, in a low voice. “Short of opening several doors—which I didn’t want to do—my route lay along that ledge below Laroo’s bedroom. Unfortunately, she was awake and spotted me! We shall have to give it up for tonight.”

I went back to my room.

Switching off the lights, I tumbled in. My last thought, as I dozed off, was that the wind was increasing in strength—the west wind. . . .

Daylight was just breaking when I awoke—to find Buzzy seated on the side of my bed!

“Speak softly, Maurice!”

**M**OMENTARILY I thought that the minstrel was playing again—but realized, as I became fully awake, that what I had heard was a choir of birds in the trees below my window.

“What’s happened, Buzzy?”

“Since you fell asleep, two things of some interest have happened. The first: the Laley Minstrel demonstrated again!”

“You heard it?”

"Yes. The room in which Malcolm sleeps is called the Green Room, as you know. It was there, at a few minutes before three o'clock, that the minstrel played."

"Where were you when it happened?"

"Outside Malcolm's door."

"How did you come to be there? Have you been prowling around the house the whole night?"

"Yes—inside and out."

"Were you outside the Green Room waiting for this thing?"

"No. I was on the balcony of the armory."

"On the balcony of the armory!"

"Exactly. Then I hurried to Malcolm's door!"

I sat up in bed, staring at him.

"But if you were on the balcony along here, how on earth did you get to the Green Room?"

"Through *your* room, Maurice! Your window was open."

"What on earth were you doing on the balcony?"

Bazarada took a cigarette from the box beside the bed.

"Not so loud. My inquiry, Maurice, was intended to establish the link between the minstrel and the west wind. My memories of the singing reed helped me. You may remember that just before we heard the sounds in the dining room last night, Hample went up to the armory and closed the window?"

"You may be right. I forget."

"Anyway, he did. I wanted to make sure that it was still closed. But when I climbed up to the balcony—it was open again!"

The significance of this escaped me. Bazarada lighted his cigarette.

"What about it?" I said.

"Most important," Bazarada replied. "I made some other investigations and then returned to the balcony. At a few minutes before three, the figure of a man—whom I am not prepared to identify, as the room was in darkness—entered the armory . . . and closed the window!"

"He didn't see you?"

“No. I climbed along here, went out of your door, and ran to the door of the Green Room. The minstrel was playing! I heard Malcolm jump out of bed; heard him cry out. He started sounding the panels. He cursed quite a lot. The weird music died away. Evidently Malcolm (who doesn’t lack nerve) decided not to disturb the household again.”

He ceased speaking and watched me in his disconcerting way.

“But what does all this mean, Buzzy?”

“It means that we are going to get really busy if a ghastly crime is to be prevented!”

The following evening, Hample confided to me that the four inside servants, who with his wife and himself made up the house staff, had given in their notices. The King’s Room had been prepared for Malcolm Brissard.

Dinner was just a long waiting for a ghostly manifestation. When, toward the close of the ordeal, Bazarada broke one of those silences, everybody started.

“It’s bad luck,” he said, “but I shall have to postpone further inquiries.”

“What do you mean?” Aylmer asked.

“I must be in London tomorrow.”

There was an awkward pause, then:

“Which means,” said Malcolm, “that I’m to be left alone with the Laley Minstrel from tonight onward? Well—I have nothing to say to that. But I had hoped *you* could solve the mystery.”

“So far,” Bazarada replied, “I have failed.”

“I’m sorry,” said Aylmer. “Malcolm and I will miss you all. We have been very happy to have you here.”

“They’re nice enough,” Laroo whispered aside to me, later, “but if I live through the night the big moment of my life will be the moment I leave.”

Bazarada’s announcement—presumably dictated by the contents of mail received during the afternoon—seemed to have cast over the party a cloud that was in no way connected with the ghostly menace.

Mrs. Hample again shared Laroo’s room.

Everyone else having turned in, Bazarada and I accompanied Malcolm to the King’s Room. This was a large, finely paneled apartment

containing an enormous canopied four-poster bed. Bazarada inspected the apartment closely.

"Note this large oak wardrobe, Maurice," he remarked, and fixed his strange, penetrating stare upon me. "It stands, you see, just left of the door. Probably dates back to the minstrel's days."

"Even if there's no harping," said our host, smiling wryly, "I don't expect to get much sleep here tonight."

Then Buzzy made an astonishing remark: "You won't. You're not staying here . . . *alone*."

"What! Why not?"

"Because I anticipate that something far more dangerous than the Laley Minstrel will be appearing here tonight—"

**H**E HAD been speaking in low tones. Now, he raised his voice:

"By all means, Malcolm! Come along now. I happen to have in my bag a copy of Maurice's latest novel. If this doesn't send you to sleep, nothing will."

The outcome of this strange conversation was that the three of us found ourselves in Bazarada's room. Malcolm and I sat on the bed. Buzzy walked up and down.

"There is no doubt," he said, "that the object of the minstrel was to get you out of the Green Room and into the King's Room."

"Why into the King's Room?"

"I don't know. It is suitable in some way for what has to be done."

"And what, do you imagine, has to be done?"

"I should prefer to wait and see. It appears fairly clear that Maurice and I are here as sure evidence. By announcing my departure in the morning, I hoped to precipitate the crisis."

"Buzzy!" Malcolm watched him, pathetically. "You speak as though you think there's something at the back of all this."

"I know it!" Buzzy replied grimly; "and I think Maurice and I are intended to witness the denouement. Now, to our dispositions." He faced us. "Go back to the King's Room, Malcolm. Remember to leave the big wardrobe open. Take this book with you. Make a great point of locking the door—but hold it clear of the latch as you do so. It will then remain ajar. Get into bed, read for ten minutes, then turn the light out."

Malcolm stared silently.

“Toss about as if restless and then slip quietly out and creep around behind the bed. Take up a position where you can reach the light switch of the bedside lamp and resign yourself to what may be a long vigil. I shall come in soon afterward. But give no sign. Do nothing—*whatever happens*—until I call out ‘Lights!’ . . . Then, switch the lamp on.”

“God knows what all this means,” said Malcolm, “but I trust to you, Buzzy.”

He went out.

“Now,” said Bazarada, “along to your room, Maurice! Carefully fasten the windows and draw the curtains. Take off your shoes. Slip the automatic in your pocket. Switch off lamps. Come out and quietly lock the door. Bring the key. It is just a quarter of midnight. In ten minutes be at the King’s Room. If in darkness, creep into the oak wardrobe. Leave the room door only just ajar as you will find it. For heaven’s sake don’t fall asleep. Say nothing and do nothing, until you hear: ‘*Lights!*’ ”

“What do I do then?”

“Jump out and have your gun ready!”

This sinister program I carried through without a hitch. The door of the King’s Room was a fraction of an inch open. I pushed gently. The room was in darkness. The position of the wardrobe I could not mistake. Bazarada had pointedly drawn attention to it. It was open and I slipped in. There were some garments hanging there, and I sat down in a corner of the ancient oak cabinet without making much noise.

Silence.

I peered out intently. Draperies covered the windows, so that the place was extraordinarily dark. But there was one chink that the moonlight had discovered. It took me a long time to discern even the larger objects. Bazarada, I believed, could see in the dark; furthermore, he could move as silently as a cat. Was he in the room? If so—where?

**K** NOWING not what to expect—what dread and fatal specter—there was no chance of my falling asleep.

As the minutes wore on, I began to make out some of the broader outlines. I could see the bed . . . and it seemed to me that someone lay

there!

Had there been a misunderstanding—an accident? Had Malcolm met some awful end before I had arrived at my post? Was he lying there, dead?

These and similar unpleasant theories obsessed me. A clock in the distant hall chimed the quarter. I had failed to note midnight. I heard, or imagined I could hear, in that fateful stillness, a sound of regular breathing.

I began to distrust my nerves. Half past twelve sounded . . . the three quarters. I was becoming cramped. I moved slowly, carefully—and as I did so a new sound checked my movements.

Faint enough it was, but unmistakable: somewhere a door was being softly opened!

I crouched, looking out.

Something—a new personality, an unfamiliar element—was in the room!

A board creaked ever so faintly.

There was an interval, an interval of seconds only; then came a hoarse cry—followed by a sound as if of wild animals in combat! The bed rocked and rattled, and:

*“Lights!”* came a cry from Bazarada.

Lights sprang up so suddenly that my eyes were *dazzled*. I struggled to my feet, and, automatic in hand, leaped out of the wardrobe.

Almost at the same moment I heard Malcolm’s voice:

“Aylmer!” then, on a note that resembled a groan, again: “Aylmer!”

Bazarada lay half across a man who sprawled on the bed, his head twisted sideways in a stranglehold. . . . It was Aylmer Brissard!

“Stick your gun in his ribs, Maurice!” said Buzzy.

There was an interval never to be forgotten. The captive, released, sat up and looked about him. His face was deathly white—and his glittering eyes appalled me. Bazarada, who wore pajamas, took up a queer object from the coverlet . . . and now I saw blood trickling down his chin.

“Sandbag!” he remarked. “I waited a bit too long!”

Malcolm Brissard, coming out from behind the bed, stared at his cousin incredulously—haggardly.

“Aylmer,” he whispered.

“In the event of your death, Malcolm,” said Buzzy, “the entire property goes to Aylmer. He was named, and you were left out, in the will that was destroyed just before your uncle’s death.”

“I know Aylmer succeeds if I die without issue,” Malcolm replied unsteadily. “I didn’t know—I had supplanted him.”

“I found out from the lawyers. Look! That’s why he wanted you in the King’s Room!”

“**B** AZARADA pointed and we all stared. A door hidden in the paneling stood wide open!

“What’s back there in that passage, Aylmer Brissard?” Buzzy asked. “Make a clean breast of it. Malcolm’s supreme judge here.”

Aylmer moistened his lips.

“One end of the passage leads to the armory,” he replied in a dry voice. “I found the way in—years ago.”

“And the other end?”

Aylmer Brissard glanced furtively from face to face.

“There’s the mouth of a shaft at the other end, just inside a low doorway. Some two hundred feet below there’s a well. Listen, Bazarada”—he turned his glittering eyes away from Malcolm—“I suppose, by common judgment, I’m just a low criminal. But while my cousin was running wild in Africa, I worked, I worked like hell, in the business. Burton Brissard was a swine to work for. He had the soul of a sadist. But he had to leave his money to someone, and as he hated Malcolm, in his will he had left it to me.”

Aylmer Brissard spoke calmly now—and I found this coolness as appalling as his glittering eyes.

“God knows I deserved it. What change he planned when he destroyed his will nobody will ever know. I didn’t mean to see those years of drudgery wasted. My scheme was perfect. How did you find out, Bazarada?”

Malcolm sat down on the side of the disordered bed and dropped his head into his hands.

“I once heard in a Malay forest,” Buzzy replied, “a singing reed. It’s a big bamboo with holes of varying size bored through the stem. The wind makes music on the singing reed very like that we have heard.

What did you use? An Aeolian harp?”

The conversational tone of Bazarada, the cool voice of Aylmer Brissard, suddenly seemed to be more horrible than anything that had gone before.

“Yes—I made it myself. The legend of the Laley Minstrel gave me the idea. When I was wiring the house, I installed the harp. It has ten catgut strings, and when the wind reaches it the effect is remarkable. It hangs between the paneling and the wall just over the inglenook in the dining room. There’s an opening above that communicates with the Green Room, so that the harp can be heard there, also.”

Aylmer Brissard was beginning to speak animatedly; his peculiar eyes, which I did not seem to have noted before, sparkled with the enthusiasm of a specialist discussing his subject. I glanced at the bowed figure of Malcolm. But he did not stir. I wanted to say to him: “Don’t misunderstand. It isn’t villainy; it’s disease. He deserves your sympathy. Long years of hated labor have broken down a fine brain.”

Aylmer Brissard was a brilliant madman! At last I understood Bazarada’s conversational tone.

“You opened the big, slatted ventilator,” said Buzzy, “when the wind was westerly, if you wanted the harp to play?”

“How did you find the ventilator?” Aylmer asked.

“I was looking for one. You have it geared up in some way to the window of the armory so that when the window is closed the ventilator is opened, and vice versa. Of course, Malcolm”—he turned to the stricken man seated on the bed—“when your body was found in the well, there would have been ample evidence to show that you had heard the minstrel again, found the door in the paneling—and fallen down the shaft—”

“Exactly!” shrieked Aylmer Brissard “Could any plan have been more perfect?”

“Hold him!”

Bazarada sprang—a second too late.

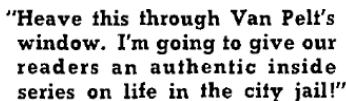
**H**IS words were addressed to me. But Aylmer Brissard swept me aside. He had the strength of a tiger. A peal of mocking laughter came as the demented man darted through the door in the paneling.

“Goodby, Malcolm!” I heard, dimly.

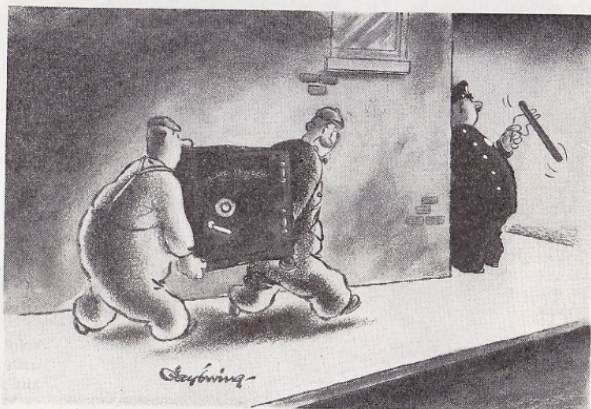
The splash, when his body reached the water, two hundred feet below,

Laley Old Place today is empty. It is one of those uninhabitable haunted houses for which the Peak district is famous.

## GALLERY



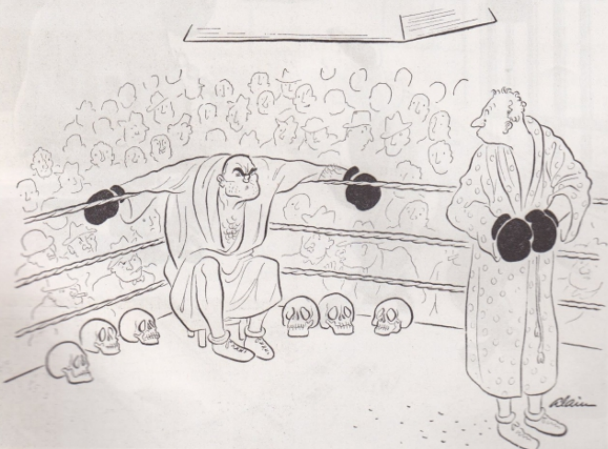
TCM HOLLOWAY



*Clayton*

"Be nonchalant!"

JAY IRVING



*Alain*

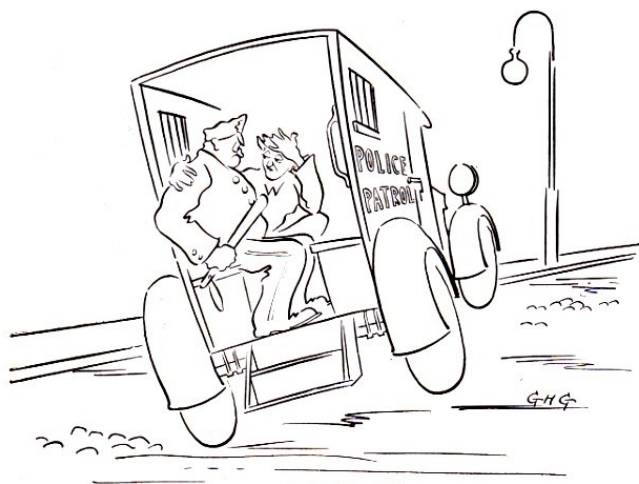
"It's not this morning. They must be over their heads."

ALAIN



"It came this morning. They must be over their mad"

ROLAND COE



"Ask him to stop at a drug store—I'm gettin' carsick"

GEORGE HAMILTON GREEN



"Now think hard—have you any mischievous friends who would enjoy playing a prank on you?" J. M. ANTHONY





**"Some connection with that Far Eastern trouble, possibly"**

GEORGE PRICE



Collier's Weekly , September 18, 1937

**"WE USE THE HONOR SYSTEM**

# AROUND HERE"

by Dr. Seuss



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